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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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Michael Lind | Robert Wright | Peter Beinart | The Editors

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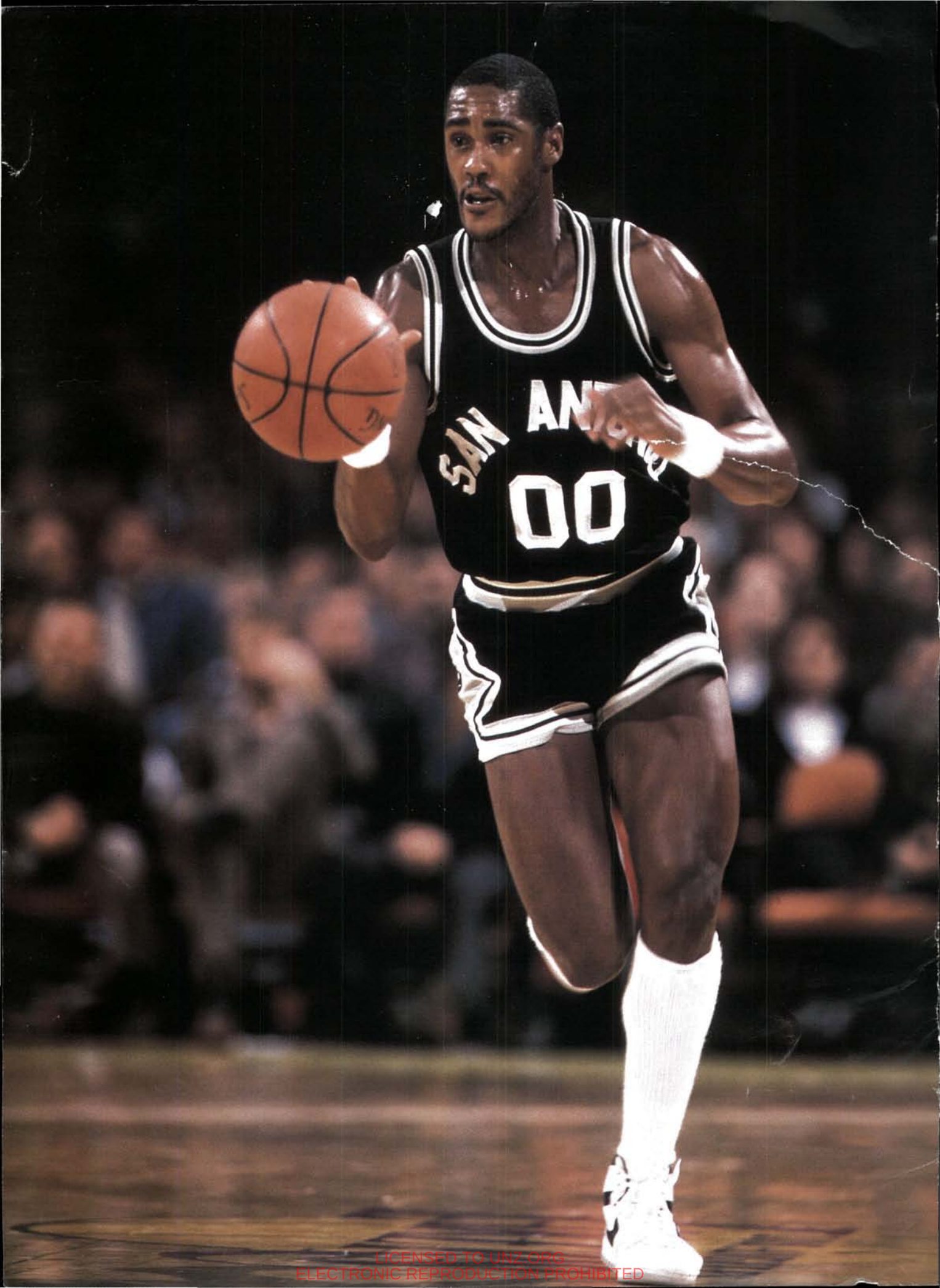

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"I was thinking, 'If I can just get to the game, I'll be all right.'"

JOHNNY MOORE
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

The point guard for the Spurs never made it to that game against the Lakers back in 1985. Instead, he landed in the hospital, where after 10 days he was diagnosed with a deadly infection.

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FROM WASHINGTON

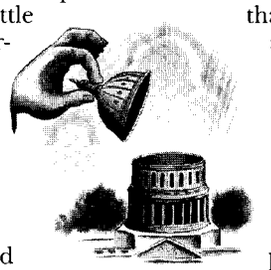
United we stand

In 1987, this magazine published a cover story by Charles Krauthammer advocating American withdrawal from the United Nations; the U.N., Krauthammer said, was bloated, corrupt, inimical to American values and, above all, bad at keeping the peace. This week, the magazine is publishing a cover story by Michael Lind advocating American withdrawal from the United Nations; the U.N., Lind says, is bloated, corrupt, inimical to American values and, above all, bad at keeping the peace. The repetition itself is not objectionable. By prevailing standards of journalistic recycling, publishing the same basic argument twice in eight years is hardly a sign of editorial sloth or obsession. Besides, there's an occasion to revisit the issue—the U.N.'s fiftieth anniversary. (Happy anniversary!) But hasn't the logic of the situation changed a bit since the Berlin Wall fell?

In principle, answering this question could distinguish Lind's piece from Krauthammer's cold-war-era essay. But Lind spends much of his time recounting the very U.N. follies Krauthammer recounted, notwithstanding their loss of relevance in the interim. When Krauthammer complained about the Commie-dominated General Assembly's support of a "New International Economic Order," and a "New International Information Order," these ideas were still being semi-seriously discussed. Encountering them in Lind's piece is like tasting Proust's madeleine. Similarly, Lind makes much of the infamous Zionism-as-racism resolution and the deeply socialistic Law of the Sea Treaty. But the Zionism resolution was repealed in 1991, and the Law of the Sea Treaty was renegotiated in 1994 to make it less socialistic. Don't these developments suggest that the end of the cold war may have actually improved the U.N.? Since Lind doesn't mention them, this question doesn't burden his analysis.

Maybe this is all peripheral. The main idea behind the U.N. was to keep the peace. The core doctrine was collective security, the idea that an attack on any member nation is an attack on all.

Those of us who would defend this doctrine's post-cold-war viability start with a big rhetorical handicap—Bosnia. But let's be clear: collective security didn't fail in Bosnia; it was never tried. Although Bosnian Serbs from the beginning got active support from Serbia, neither Boutros Boutros-Ghali nor President Bush ever conceived the matter as transborder aggression. And, though I've argued ad nauseum that Bush and Boutros-Ghali *should* have defined the situation this way, I must admit that the premise of transborder aggression would have been in some ways technical. The Bosnian conflict is largely a civil war, and the U.N. wasn't designed to stop civil wars. Indeed, the dirty little secret about the 1992 intervention in Somalia's civil war—another U.N. failure Lind cites—is that it had no firm legal basis in the U.N. charter.



Certainly we can blame Boutros-Ghali (and Bush) for much of what happened in Somalia and Bosnia—and we can hope both events are now etched in the U.N.'s memory. (Lesson: don't place troops amid hostilities unless they're there to take sides, as U.N.-authorized NATO warplanes finally started quasi-doing in Bosnia.) But it's silly to act as if the Somalian and Bosnian messes reveal inherent U.N. flaws. Derelict leadership makes any institution look bad.

If the U.N. isn't supposed to handle problems as diffusely messy as the Somalian crisis, what is it supposed to handle? Oh, for example: if some Iraqi dictator invaded a dinky country, then the Security Council could authorize bombing his nation into rubble. Lind and other U.N. critics love to dismiss this American-led exercise of collective security as unilateralism in disguise. Well, first of all, tell that to the various non-American soldiers who died rolling back Iraqi aggression. Second, the U.N.'s imprimatur—the aura of international law and consensus—brought something raw unilateralism would have lacked: political cover for Saudi Arabia, which furnished us with bases in defiance of Arab opposition. For the great powers to use the U.N. as a tool to keep pipsqueak troublemakers in line is exactly the sort of thing the U.N.'s designers, including FDR, had in mind.

Obviously, if fifty years from now the U.S. is still the only great power that stirs the U.N. to action and the nation that always supplies the lion's share of the manpower and firepower, then the idea of collective security will have failed to mature. But for now I'll settle for this remarkable first step: since the cold war ended, there's been one clear-cut opportunity for collective security to work, and it did.

The end of the cold war coincides auspiciously with the era of microchip weaponry. For the great powers to play globo-cop via the U.N. used to mean taking heavy casualties in wars that struck the public as remote from their vital interests. But, as both the Persian Gulf and Bosnian wars show, the West's technological hegemony now allows it to intervene by air with precision, power and low risk of bodily harm. Indeed, if Bosnia *were* a simple case of transborder aggression, and we simply wanted to keep up the air strikes until the Bosnian Muslims routed the Bosnian Serbs, that would be easy in military and domestic political terms.

There's no denying that the U.N. faces big problems. (1) National disintegration may now be a more common problem than transborder aggression. (2) Though the great-power veto isn't as paralyzing as it was during the cold war, it still means the U.N. won't act in all cases of transborder aggression. (Ideally, any elevation of Germany and Japan to a permanent Security Council seat would entail changing the veto threshold from one permanent member out of five to two out of seven.) So, okay: the U.N. can't cure all ills—can't even punish all acts of transborder aggression. Sometimes, maybe often, we'll have to act without it. But I fail to see what's wrong with trying to help the U.N. evolve—using it wisely when it can help us and the world, and discouraging its unwise use (e.g., "peacekeeping" amid civil war).

With the end of the cold war and the coming of microelectronic weaponry, U.N.-mediated collective security is more plausible than ever before. Granted, that's not saying much. But it's something. Whether you want to build on it depends on your basic disposition. Do you like the *idea* of the U.N., the idea of the world's races and nations collaborating in the cause of peace and justice? Do you like this idea so much that you're willing to support a pale imitation of it, so long as progress is being made, however haltingly? Or is the idea of universal brotherhood, even in a rather legalistic and theoretical incarnation, just too hopelessly corny, too obviously at odds with human nature and world history, for any sophisticate to countenance? For some of us, that's part of the appeal.

ROBERT WRIGHT

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

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CORRESPONDENCE

Postpartum

To the editors:

Ruth Shalit ("Race in the Newsroom," October 2) writes that "a newspaper's indifference to the subjects of its coverage is the sign of a newspaper's integrity." Does this also hold true for magazines like TNR? Is there even a fleeting chance that TNR would have given Ruth Shalit *thirteen* full pages if she had come to her editors with a comparable story on affirmative action in, say, the construction industry (an industry where affirmative action is more common and, more importantly, often government-mandated)? I doubt it. Shalit's article certainly says something interesting about *The Washington Post*, but it says something even more interesting (and troubling) about the media's exaggerated sense of its own importance.

ERIC MULLER
Laramie, Wyoming

To the editors:

While I do not endorse *The Washington Post*'s methods for enhancing "diversity" among its staff, Ruth Shalit reveals the reasons why newspapers take such draconian measures by the biases in her own article.

Shalit appears to long for more stories about "the social pathologies at the heart of Washington's black underclass" but is obviously uncomfortable with the fact that the underclass is a minority among black Americans. She makes light of the relevance of more human interest stories about blacks in the Washington, D.C., area, yet the *The Washington Post* publishes hundreds of human interest (read: shallow, puff-piece) stories about people who happen to be white in the D.C. area every year.

Shalit seems to have no problem with these, only what I would consider to be stories about blacks who are normal—who work, go to church and pay taxes. Shalit laments that a "story on delinquent black girls languished in the *Post*'s computer system for over a month amid concerns that it wasn't 'upbeat' enough." She should save her sorrow for the hundreds of unreported stories about upper-middle-class (read: white) teenagers in the suburbs who are using drugs and disrespecting their parents, largely the result of parents who are too busy working to pay attention or are divorced, leaving the kids to fend for themselves. If Shalit thinks the news media needs pointers and is missing important societal trends, she should focus more on the "white pathologies" that too many of her colleagues are willing to ignore.

GWEN DAYE RICHARDSON
Houston, Texas

To the editors:

I never told Ruth Shalit that I believe *The Washington Post* has a "lead ceiling" for minorities. I never told her I believe I have no future at the *Post*. On the contrary, I told her very clearly that I believe I that I have been treated fairly, that it would be erroneous for her to portray me as an aggrieved victim or a malcontent.

I did tell Shalit I believe there is a perception within the *Post* that having a "sponsor" or "rabbi" is important when it comes to securing some promotions. I told her I believe there is some truth to this perception—and to the extent that it's true it applies to everyone—white, black, Latino, Asian, male, female. This is merely the nature of many large institutions, I told Shalit. I added that I thought the *Post* deserved credit for trying to deal with issues involving coverage, promotions and perceptions.

Shalit completely misrepresented the content and tone of my comments.

RUBEN CASTANEDA
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

I was obliged to write to set the record straight about my experience at *The Washington Post*. In her October 2 article, Ruth Shalit claims that I left the *Post* "out of frustration," which is patently false. I reluctantly left the *Post* after last fall's mayoral election to return to another superb newspaper, *The Dallas Morning News*.

Furthermore, Shalit claims that there were stories addressing racial matters or concerning black elected officials in Washington, D.C., that *Post* editors hadn't allowed to get in the paper; and she attempts to buttress the claim, in part, by mischaracterizing and misquoting my views. Let me state unequivocally that not once in my three and a half years at the *Post* did I ever witness or experience a story denied publication for the reason she described.

I also was disheartened by Shalit's treatment of black reporters and editors: she propped all of us up as cardboard figures without sufficient portfolio and then dismissed us collectively as wayward offspring of affirmative action. The result is that your readers, who may be genuinely torn about the pros and cons of affirmative action, were not presented with full or factual information but rather were served thinly veiled opinion masquerading as informed and insightful journalism. Perhaps the most disconcerting conclusion drawn by Shalit was the suggestion that the quality of journalism at the *Post* had suffered under the weight of affirmative action goals. Anyone who has examined the *Post* over the past two decades and who understands the paper's history would realize that this is not the case.

JAMES RAGLAND
Dallas, Texas

Ruth Shalit replies:

During a phone interview, Ruben Castaneda told me that in the six years he'd been at the paper, the *Post* had indeed treated him "very fairly." He went on to say, however, that the culture of the paper was one in which "Ivy League-educated white males from an upper-middle-class background" predominate; that for Latinos, "doing good work is only part of the battle"; that when it came to hiring and promotion, "there is definitely a feeling at times ... that the fix is in." He then gave me names and phone numbers of several former colleagues who had felt victimized by discrimination; and it was in this context that he reported the widespread perception of a "lead ceiling" for Latino reporters. James Ragland, too, was quoted accurately and in context. During the course of several hour-long phone conversations, he described how accountability reporting about black city officials often got "buried," "bogged down" or "had to go through more hoops"; how in a competitive news environment the delays often grew exasperating. Asked for examples, he cited a series of pieces on the District's disintegrating public housing program that had "gotten buried" deep inside the Metro section. He also spoke at length about the "tremendous deference" the *Post* showed mayoral candidate Marion Barry in 1994; about how reporters were pressured to "bend over backwards ... to report every positive thing he was doing." I'm sorry that consternation with my article has prompted Mr. Castaneda and Mr. Ragland to distance themselves from quotations that were accurately recorded and presented in context.

Flipping out

To the editors:

Peter Schrag's article on California Governor Pete Wilson ("Flip Wilson," October 2) neglects to mention his egregious flip-flops on drug policy, a little-noticed matter on which he has been far from moderate. Early in his career, Wilson was sympathetic to marijuana decriminalization and sponsored a "no-bust users policy." As governor, he has repeatedly vetoed bills to legalize medical marijuana and needle exchange and pushed

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harsher penalties for users.

This has led him into yet another flip-flop on the issue of federal mandates. On one hand, he has volubly attacked federal mandates in opposing the "motor voter" bill. On the other, he has tried to force the state into accepting a federal mandate that he himself sponsored as senator, aimed at making the state suspend drivers' licenses for non-driving drug offenses.

Wilson's flip-flops may disqualify him from the presidency, but a lot of us think he'd make a fine choice for vice president.

DALE H. GIERINGER
Berkeley, California

To heir is human

To the editors:

I'm sure I'm not the only one who has pointed this out to you, but in the first sentence of the editorial "51-49" in your October 2 issue, you refer to the Archduke Franz Ferdinand as "the Austro-Hungarian emperor." As I'm sure you are aware, the Archduke was the imperial *heir*, not the emperor. It has no bearing on the point of your editorial, but it is nevertheless a factual error. Thought you might like to know.

MICHAEL SPIRES
DeKalb, Illinois

But is it true?

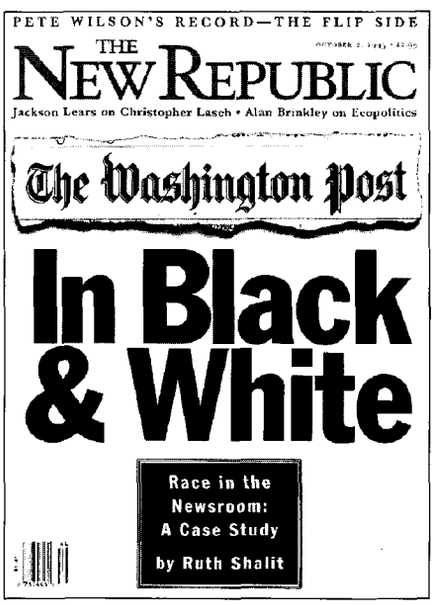
To the editors:

It is ironic that Alan Brinkley ("Balance in the Earth," October 2) should praise Gregg Easterbrook's *A Moment on the Earth* and Aaron Wildavsky's *But Is It True?* for their shared thesis that environmentalism has failed to "defend its claims on the basis of evidence and rational argument," for this is just what these two books fail to do. Rarely have environmental books been published by mainstream presses that were so scientifically flawed.

A Moment on the Earth contains literally hundreds of quite basic scientific errors, only some of which we at the Environmental Defense Fund have catalogued and corrected in a report (titled "A Moment of Truth") on the book. The analysis contrasts many of Easterbrook's assertions with peer-reviewed literature and finds them without scientific merit.

Like *A Moment on the Earth*, *But Is It True?* contains some of the same discredited claims that have long since been evaluated and dismissed by respected, independent scientists. Such books attempt to raise doubts about the scientific consensus concerning ecological problems through the use of incorrect information and out-of-date theories. In addition, *A Moment on the Earth* uses simplistic ideological characterization in an attempt to disparage expert judgments.

For example, *The New York Times* has recently reported that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a group involving over 2,000 scientists that advises the world's governments on climate change, has concluded that human-induced global warming appears to have already begun. Yet in his chapter on global warming, Easterbrook attempts to dispute the opinions of those scientists who have long argued for such a possibility, including James Hansen of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies and Stephen Schneider of Stanford University, by calling them "greenhouse true


PETE WILSON'S RECORD—THE FLIP SIDE
THE NEW REPUBLIC
Jackson Lears on Christopher Lasch • Alan Brinkley on Ecopolitics
The Washington Post
In Black & White
Race in the Newsroom: A Case Study
by Ruth Shalit

believers," and then arguing that their conclusions were based on their being "political liberals."

The fact that the IPCC's conclusions represent the consensus of so many scientists from around the world shows there is no such thing as "liberal science." There is only sound science and unsound science, and books such as *A Moment on the Earth* and *But Is It True?* are filled with so many errors and distortions that one is tempted to say that they contain no science at all.

MICHAEL OPPENHEIMER
New York, New York

Some like it hot

To the editors:

Your October 9 Notebook comment on gambling and morality reflects a pronounced ignorance about Bill Clinton's hometown of Hot Springs, Arkansas. Has the author ever even set foot there? I doubt it. Hot Springs was indeed a regular watering hole for the mob during Prohibition. But by the time Clinton and my wife and I grew up there in the '50s and early '60s, it was the farthest thing from what you call "mob-infested." Clinton may well have learned the basics of low politics there. That was part of the prevailing culture. But it was a political culture born of small-minded, small-town venality, not of mob influence or gambling. Prostitution, drugs and violent crime were present, but only in limited measure that had little impact on our lives. No self-respecting social scientist would give credence to the claim that such limited phenomena were attributable to gambling, or that gambling produced some degree of moral turpitude.

GREGORY D. FOSTER
Vienna, Virginia

Not out of the woods

To the editors:

John B. Judis ("Into the Wilderness," October 2) takes heart concerning the impotence of the Christian Coalition from too small and irrelevant a sample. What is more significant is the coalition's influence in demonizing unwed mothers and putting family caps on years of welfare.

Silent prayer—even creationism (Barney lets most kids know there used to be dinosaurs)—won't starve and cripple children, as will welfare "reform."

By ignoring the economic constraints (joblessness, lower wages, job insecurity, lost benefits) on family formation and survival, the conservative right ignores causes and punishes symptoms. The Christian Coalition's power to exercise the counter-Enlightenment cannot be ignored or denied just because a fundamentalist minister in New Hampshire overstepped in the matter of creationism. It still might help nominate Phil Gramm and re-elect the obscenity of the 104th.

HENRY STERN
Petaluma, California

Fallout

To the editors:

I don't like the French nuclear tests either (Notebook, October 2), but you can't criticize the French government as showing "contempt ... for those peoples, tens of thousands of miles away, who will suffer the fallout." The tests are all below the surface, and unless something goes drastically wrong—a chance not to be taken lightly—there'll be no fallout to spread radiation in the air or water.

TOM ROWE
Durham, North Carolina

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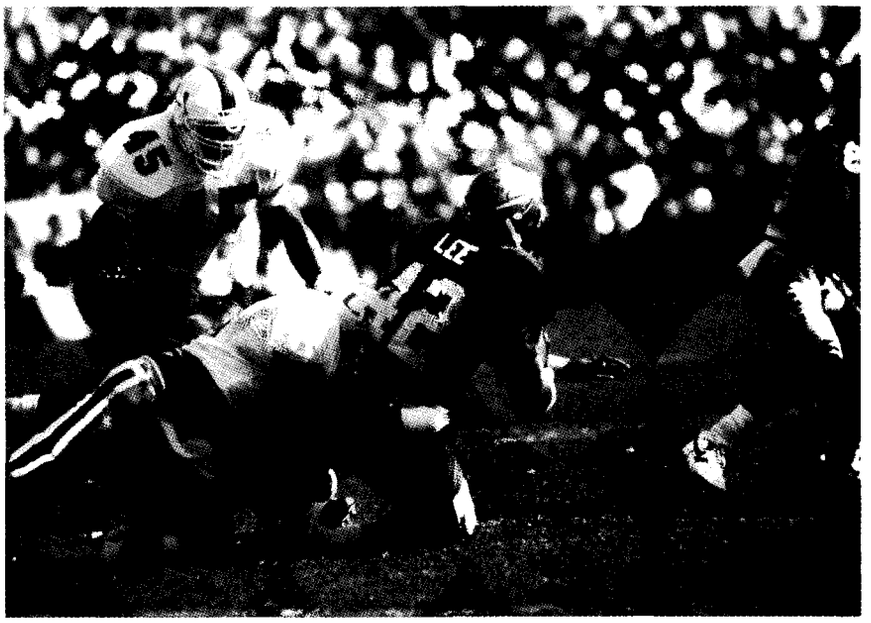
Turning Dreams into Realities



The "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program encourages student athletes to take the lessons learned on the football field today and teach children in the classrooms tomorrow.

Encouraging Student Athletes to Become Teachers

During his three years as nose guard on Louisiana State University's football team, John Mawae came to know the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. But nothing moved him more than working with disabled children in a Special Olympics held at LSU. "Seeing those kids realize their dreams against all odds really got to me," Mawae recalls. "I knew then what I wanted to do: help kids like them realize their dreams."

Mawae will get that chance, thanks in part to the "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program created by the College Football Association (CFA) and sponsored by Hitachi, Ltd. Started last academic year, the program awards $335,000 in scholarships at the 67 CFA member universities. At each university, a $5,000 scholarship is awarded to an outstanding senior or graduate student who intends to become a teacher and has participated in the school's football program as a player, trainer, or manager. Mawae, a 1992 scholarship recipient, intends to use his grant to pursue a career teaching kids with special needs.

"Teaching plays an important but undervalued role in society," says Charles M. Neinas, the CFA's executive director. "We'd like to encourage more student athletes to pursue this field, because we think that what they learn on the football field helps to make them effective teachers in the classroom."

Nicole Hagner, a recent University of Pittsburgh graduate, agrees. "Athletics teaches you that it's possible to turn the right dream into a reality through hard work, discipline and teamwork. I'd like to bring that lesson to the classroom," she says. Hagner, who served as a student trainer on Pitt's football team, plans to use her grant to become certified as a high school biology teacher.

Nicole Hagner, University of Pittsburgh graduate and 1992 scholarship recipient.

As college football fans and parents of school-age children, we are proud to be a part of the "Hitachi Promise of Tomorrow" scholarship program. We hope that it helps more student athletes like John and Nicole to realize their dreams of becoming teachers.

HITACHI

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 30, 1995

THE OCTOBER SURPRISE

"We must continue to bear the responsibility of the world's leadership." "[I]n Bosnia, as elsewhere, if the United States does not lead, the job will not be done." "[I]t is important that we never forget that our values and our interests are the same." "We see the benefits of American leadership in the progress now being made in Bosnia." "The isolationists are simply wrong." Golden words, all; and Bill Clinton's words, all. Really.

In a serious and sophisticated speech on American foreign policy, delivered before Freedom House on October 6, the president finally matriculated as the leader of the most powerful country in the world. Passionately and rightly, he defended the foreign-aid budget that the Republican primitives on the Hill want to kill. For the first time in his presidency, Clinton seemed to kindle to the challenges abroad, and not only to the economic ones. He was explicit about the need to use force in certain times and certain places, and spoke finely about "the measured use of the world's strongest military." In Baghdad and Beijing and elsewhere, he must have looked like he means not just business, but *business*. He certainly looked that way in Washington.

The protests of his advisers notwithstanding, the president's speech represents a reversal of the spirit in which his administration has conducted foreign policy, and not only in the Balkans, so far. We are cheered by this correction of the president's course, but we are also saddened, because everything that the president said this October was true also last October, and the October before that. And the political motivation for Clinton's pronouncement—now that foreign policy is no longer exploding in the administration's face, there is profit in dwelling upon it—is plain. We hope that Clinton's new gravity about the bloodied and bloodying post-cold-war world is not only the campaign of 1996. The next crisis will tell.

There was one theme of Clinton's speech, however, which left him unreconstructed. This was his enthusiasm for multilateralism, particularly for the United Nations. "We don't want to run off into the future all by ourselves," he said. "And that means we have to work responsibly through these international organizations," by which he meant the U.N. and the international financial agencies. Well, yes and no. It is true that the approval of the U.N. for actions such as the expulsion of Saddam from Kuwait and the NATO retaliation against the Bosnian Serbs made those actions easier to take, practically and morally. But it was the absence of U.N. approval for anything more than the expulsion of Saddam from Kuwait that left him to recover his strength, and it was the presence of U.N. troops in Bosnia that allowed the genocide to proceed almost unhindered. Clinton told his Freedom House audience that unilateralism is a form of isolationism, even if "[w]hen our vital interests are at stake ... we might have to act alone." But "vital interests" are complicated things—they are political and economic, direct and indirect, long-term and short-term—and "acting alone" is still acting. It is multilateralism that is a form of isolationism, when it is an expression of philosophical or strategic timidity.

It is the birthday of the United Nations, but who can honestly say that it is a happy one? On October 24, 1945, the U.N. came into being with four aims, stated eloquently in the preface to its charter: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights," "to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained," "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom." The idealism in these words is affecting, but we know too much in 1995 to accept in good cheer the benedictions of 1945. The evils that the U.N. set out to destroy are prospering; and while not all this dark prosperity is the consequence of the U.N., a terrible measure of it is. During the cold war, the U.N. became a chamber of hypocrisy and proxy aggression, and it had nothing at all to do with the greatest victory in the cause of human rights and social progress in its time, which was the collapse of the Soviet Union. Since the cold war, the U.N. has done little to alleviate, and in some instances it has abetted, some of the worst savagery in the world.

So Mr. President, you really must be prepared sometimes to go it alone. You really must mean what you said. For it is when the United States goes it alone that the genuine democrats and the genuine agents of social change around the world do not go it alone. •

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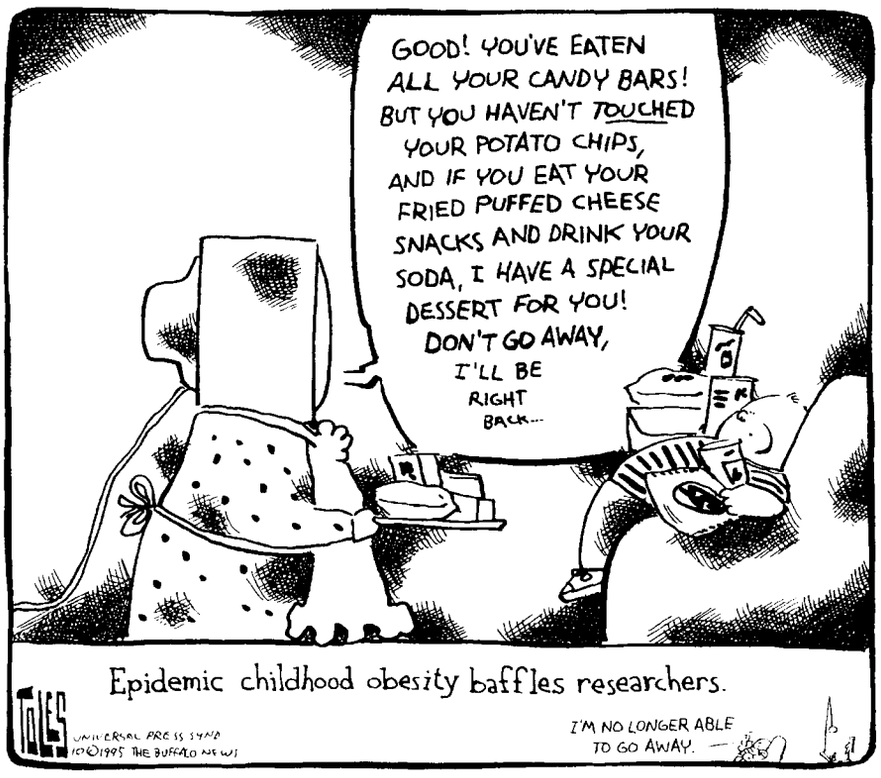
NOTEBOOK

SIC TRANSIT: Focus groups asked by the Dole campaign to name animals they associate with Republican presidential candidates paired Phil Gramm with weasels, foxes, hyenas and ferrets; Pat Buchanan with pit bulls, badgers and wolverines; and Dole himself with mules, draft horses, tortoises, chameleons and kangaroos.... A man injured in a car crash on the Golden Gate Bridge has filed a suit seeking to have it closed.... Child-welfare authorities in Durham County, North Carolina, will investigate violations of new laws that mandate children's bedtimes and prohibit washing out a child's mouth with soap.... The state of Missouri purchased 800 pounds of hemp from the National Association for the Reform of Marijuana Laws to use in an exhibit at the Battle of Lexington historical site.... According to a new survey by the Luntz Research company, independents and female baby-boomers believe that "Price is Right" host Bob Barker better understands the value of a dollar than their own congressional representative, and a majority of working women trust the predictions of astrologers more than those of their elected representatives.... U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has approved a new line of Swatch watches commemorating the organization's fiftieth anniversary.


GOOD! YOU'VE EATEN ALL YOUR CANDY BARS! BUT YOU HAVEN'T TOUCHED YOUR POTATO CHIPS, AND IF YOU EAT YOUR FRIED PUFFED CHEESE SNACKS AND DRINK YOUR SODA, I HAVE A SPECIAL DESSERT FOR YOU! DON'T GO AWAY, I'LL BE RIGHT BACK...
Epidemic childhood obesity baffles researchers.
TALES
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYND ©1995 THE BUFFALO NEWS
I'M NO LONGER ABLE TO GO AWAY.

ON THE DOLE: Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee Bill Archer, who last month unveiled a proposal to reduce the legendarily wasteful ethanol subsidy by $1.8 billion over the next eight years, seems to be one of the few Republicans who takes seriously GOP campaign pledges to end special interest tax breaks. Unfortunately, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole doesn't appear to share his concern. Days after Archer announced the proposal, Dole and Republican Senator Charles Grassley of Iowa wrote a letter criticizing Archer's plan as "ill-advised." Ten days after writing the letter, Senator Dole—joined by an ethanol lobbyist and the Iowa governor—met with House Majority Leader Newt Gingrich. The next day Gingrich demanded the cut be dropped. Dole's commitment to the ethanol subsidy is hardly surprising. Together, the Archer-Daniels-Midland Company—the world's largest ethanol producer—and the family of its CEO have given $76,000 to the Dole presidential campaign. And the ADM foundation has funneled $160,000 to Dole's foundation. In an attempt to rationalize the subsidy, Dole and Grassley's letter called it one of the "few bright successes" in "our fight for energy independence." In fact, the success is quite dim. Despite the tax exemption—which has cost $5 billion over the past decade—ethanol replaces *only one* percent of foreign oil. Furthermore, few environmentalists believe that ethanol is the cleanest replacement fuel around. Its appeal is pure politics, as was recognized in 1986 by a Reagan Transportation Secretary who denounced it as "inappropriate." Her name: Elizabeth Dole.

AND WE THOUGHT THE *POST* HAD PROBLEMS: *American Journalism Review* reports in its October issue that *The Detroit News* asks its reporters to "mainstream" their articles by making sure that every story includes a quote from at least one minority. One reporter ran into trouble while covering a legislative hearing on dove hunting. "It was mostly white men in the room, wearing plaid shirts and jeans," the reporter told *AJR* freelancer Valarie Basheda. "There was not a black face in the crowd." Nevertheless, an editor demanded he find a black hunter. *News* assistant features editor John Wark, who helps to implement mainstreaming, hadn't heard the story but when TNR called him this week he sounded unfazed. "That complaint presumes that a minority person cannot be the best source," he said. Asked to cite an example of the pervasive neglect which justifies such draconian new guidelines, Wark came up with an example of a *News* photographer who, when covering a dance in famously white-bread Macomb County, took pictures only of white people. Bob Giles, the *News*' editor and publisher, defended

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the example. "If you go out to Macomb County and assume that you're only going to take pictures of white people, you're furthering a stereotype," he argued. Whether or not you're also furthering the truth, it seems, is hardly relevant.

THE TWO D'SOUZAS: "Racial discrimination is not the same as other kinds of discrimination, for historical and political reasons. The Supreme Court calls it an 'invidious category,' and I think rightly so. All kinds of other discrimination may be tolerable whereas racial discrimination is not. If I open up a restaurant and say you can't come into my restaurant if you don't have shoes I am being discriminatory—perhaps arbitrarily so.... If I say no one can come into my restaurant who is *black*, that creates a special problem and rightly so. A racial discrimination is different."
—Dinesh D'Souza, "Race and Racism: An American Dilemma Revisited," *Salmagundi*, Fall 1994/Winter 1995 issue, page 64.

"What we need is a long-term strategy that holds the government to a rigorous standard of race neutrality, while allowing private actors to be free to discriminate as they wish. In practice, this means uncompromising color blindness in government hiring and promotion, criminal justice, and the drawing of voting districts. Yet individuals and companies would be allowed to discriminate in private transactions such as renting an apartment or hiring for a job. Am I calling for a repeal of the Civil Rights Act of 1964? Actually, yes. The law should be changed so that its nondiscrimination provisions apply only to government.
... [Richard] Epstein argues that it is not unjust for an employer to refuse to hire even the most qualified black because the job is the employer's to give and the rejected applicant is no worse off than before applying for the job. Without putting it this way, Epstein is defending ethnocentrism as not only natural but also justifiable. As we have seen, it is a universal practice to prefer members of one's own group over strangers. Epstein implies, and I agree, that this is a defensible and in some cases even admirable trait."
—Dinesh D'Souza, *The End of Racism* (The Free Press, 1995), page 544.

NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Official: Only rain will cure drought

—*The Herald-News*, Westport, Massachusetts, page A1.
(Thanks to David T. King of Westport, Massachusetts.)

House cleaners find careers in the homes of others

—*The Buffalo News*, page E1, August 27.
(Thanks to Richard T. Reinhard of Buffalo, New York.)

Post-revolutionary Cuba.

SEMPER FIDEL

By Daphne Barak with Richard Gooding

Just before I left for Cuba, on a too-long flight by way of Mexico City and Cancun, a prominent New York businessman whose vast holdings happen to include gambling casinos pulled me aside. "When you see Fidel," he whispered conspiratorially, "tell him I'd love to open a casino in Havana—the minute we're allowed in."

No one in Cuba, of course, needs a reporter to pass the message that the American business world is waiting on the beachhead, ready for the signal, any signal, to land.

And in the first week of October, there was a signal, of sorts. Two days after discussing Cuba with Pope John Paul II in Newark, President Clinton eased restrictions on Cuban-American travel to the island, U.S.-Cuban cultural exchanges, U.S. charitable donations to Cuban nongovernmental groups, and on the activities of Cuban news bureaus on American soil. (Now it looks as if the U.S. will grant Castro a visa, for the first time since 1979, to attend the U.N.'s fiftieth-anniversary celebration later this month.) Trying to balance the politics and avoid a punitive congressional initiative, the administration also said it would step up enforcement of the 33-year-old American trade embargo. Predictably, the politics were messy; not even the pope, who wants the boycott ended, could have been entirely pleased. Phil Gramm accused the president of "putting out the welcome mat to Castro instead of tightening the noose around his aging neck." Bob Dole called for a quick Senate vote on the Helms-Burton bill, which would penalize foreign firms and countries that do business in Cuba. Whatever the outcome, the Cuban issue is on stage, front and center and divisive as ever, for the coming presidential year.

In the smoky haze of Havana's cafés, the talk is also of the embargo—Cubans call it "the blockade." But the talk is really about dollars. Both ordinary Cubans and the most senior government officials talk incessantly of the dollar and of "openness"—and it comes across as rank begging in this country of machismo. The hunger here—real physical hunger among the people, hunger for foreign investment among the officials—is pervasive. It has led to the return of prostitution, even in the prestigious Fifth Avenue area of Havana with its stately embassies and manicured gardens. It is hinted at by the jobs most sought after here—taxi drivers, chauffeurs, translators, waiters; anything that puts you in contact with tourists and their wallets. And it surfaces whenever you take a government official to lunch. Just sit across

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from a man who earns $3 a month—paid in pesos—and watch him order six or seven courses, each one the most expensive on the menu (lobster cocktail at $30), washing it all down with the rarest wine from the cellar, and the point is made. An ugly American capitalist can go broke talking to Cuban officials about foreign investment.

"I don't understand why foreigners don't invest more in Cuba," Deputy Minister of Foreign Investment Roberto Talarid tells me in his office, in a building threatening to collapse at any moment. The curtains are torn, the air conditioning drips even more humidity into the saturated air (it doesn't work at all in the rest of the building), and the elevator is stuck on the ground floor. Cuba, he insists, "is one of the most stable countries in the world—really. You invest money today, and there is no military or financial downside that is predictable...."

One who did invest—although apparently not in the traditional sense—was fugitive American financier and scam artist Robert Vesco. For almost fifteen years, he was an honored citizen of Havana, a personal friend of Castro's, and then suddenly on May 31 he was arrested at his mansion and thrown into the dreaded Santa Maria prison. It was major news in the U.S. and around the world, but without access to CNN or any American media, not a word of it reached here; not one line appeared in the Cuban national newspaper. The American press speculated that Castro was throwing a bone to Clinton. Castro's spin, in an interview, was this: "He was a spy." I beg your pardon? "Yes. When he came to Cuba he had a very positive attitude toward the revolution. But we finally found out that he had changed his ways...." Translation: Vesco was no longer willing, or able, to line the pockets of his hosts.

Right now, the U.S. is virtually the only country missing the boat into Cuba. Latin American nations, no longer threatened by the island's waning ideology, scramble to trade with Cuba. Mexico, which earned Castro's undying affection by refusing to join the U.S. embargo, is pouring in millions of dollars, making it the island's largest foreign investor, according to recent figures in *The New York Times*. And Brazil has signed the latest big-money deal, to take over cigarette production in a country whose residents consume 12 billion cigarettes a year.

Is Washington simply waiting for Castro to die? His passing would certainly make it easier to lift the embargo. But by waiting, and sustaining the embargo, America is limiting its input in the succession process, which is clearly underway. For their part, top Cuban officials argue that the embargo isolates not Cuba but the United States. And they go out of their way to compliment Clinton. Castro is no exception. In one breath, he is downright generous, even gallant, toward the president; in the next, however, he worries that "it's not really healthy for Clinton that I give him too many compliments. It could hurt him in the next elections."

"It's not really my fault that I'm still alive," Castro says with a smile. "It's not really my fault that they didn't manage to kill me." But Castro, despite rumors of a throat ailment and a mysterious hospitalization, is far healthier than his revolution. Even he is now a "realist" about capitalism; he has qualms about some of his government's economic reforms—particularly its embrace of foreign investment and its moves toward a free market for farmers and others—but he accepts them; he knows the inevitable end of the U.S. embargo will prove a massive headache for Cuba, but he's willing to "gamble" that all he's created won't be swept away by a return to the wide-open Havana of old.

Castro does not have his own First Lady, and while he concedes he has fathered a number of children (but "not as many as people want to think"), none are in line for succession. It is one of Castro's "adopted" sons, Roberto Robaina, who most definitely is. Robaina, 39, is short in stature (Castro calls him "Roberto Tico") but full of sexy charisma. As Foreign Minister, he is the most powerful man in Cuba after Fidel and his brother Raoul. I met Robaino at a garden party at the Canadian Embassy (Canada is Cuba's closest ally now; Fidel regularly appears at Canadian Embassy functions, and he has even taken to dropping by the embassy, uninvited, for coffee with the Canadian ambassador) and interviewed him in his office the following day. Robaino, a health fanatic, bicycles to work wearing a jumpsuit and sockless sandals. His office teems with peacocks and parrots.

"The revolution was good in its time," Robaina says, using the past tense. "The world is changing and we have to change. We did make a few mistakes; maybe we were wrong." When I ask Robaina about Cuba's overtures to Clinton, the parrot gets hysterical, making so much noise that I can't concentrate. "That's how he responds to Bill Clinton," Robaina chuckles. "And if you ask him about the blockade, he says, 'No. No. No.' " We tried it, and it was true.

This summer was full of overtures to Clinton from this shimmering island. Just before my arrival, six political prisoners were released—no doubt a thank-you note to the Clinton administration for its unprecedented agreement in May to begin deporting Cuban refugees who try to enter the U.S. illegally. And while I was there, it was later revealed, Cuban exile leader Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo visited the country on a secret ten-day visit that included an audience with Castro. Gutierrez told reporters in Miami that he asked Castro to allow his Florida-based Cambio Cubano into Cuba as an opposition party.

The Cuban Revolution has not lost its occasional bite. A German tourist lacking the proper visa recently landed in jail, without his clothes. Even after the German ambassador secured his release, the hapless tourist was forced to sign a statement of guilt and to pay $110 for "room and breakfast"—a cell, milk and sugar. Members of my TV film crew were so edgy about the secret police that when a maid in their hotel walked in after midnight to offer them a Leona Helmsley-style bedtime mint, they imagined the worst and blocked her entry. Ordinary Cubans still won't hazard anything but servile flattery of Castro to strangers. But, like Robaina, they speak of the revolution in the past tense. When Castro is gone, what will be left?

"Believe me," says Castro of his passing, "the life of

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Cuba is not going to stop for one second, even a bit of a second." Asked who will succeed him, he replies, "This is a question you should ask the CIA. They spend so much time on how I'm going to end up...." Fidel looks more bemused than disturbed by the prospect; it's clear he's thought about it a lot as well.

DAPHNE BARAK is a journalist whose interviews with royalty and political leaders have been published in *The Sunday Times* and elsewhere. RICHARD GOODING is a writer and former metropolitan editor of *The New York Daily News*.

BRONX POSTCARD

YANKEE, STAY HOME

By David Greenberg

When Major League Baseball let George Steinbrenner resume active ownership of the New York Yankees after his celebrated two-and-a-half-year banishment in 1993, it was like Commissioner Gordon telling Batman that the Joker had once again escaped from prison: it was only a matter of time before Gotham would be held hostage to some new outlandish threat. True to form, Steinbrenner soon began making noises about moving the Bronx Bombers out of the Bronx home where they've been for seventy-two years. First, he angled for a new stadium on Manhattan's West Side, at the Long Island Railroad yards between 31st and 33rd. That dalliance brought predictable groans from both Manhattanites fearing congestion and fans who like the Yankees just fine where they are. But the wails didn't crescendo until last month, when *The New York Observer* reported that, in an act of chutzpah too self-parodic to be true, Steinbrenner was secretly negotiating to relocate to Lyndhurst, New Jersey.

To be fair, Steinbrenner is not alone: for the past decade, owners of major sports franchises have been confounding the taxpayers of struggling American cities. Renovate or build a new stadium, they demand, or else they'll pack up for Phoenix or Florida or even a once-abandoned city like St. Louis or Oakland. (Carpetbagging, which has become a great American sports tradition, has at least generated some deliciously incongruous team nicknames. The former New Orleans basketball team, since its move to Salt Lake City, has been known as the Utah Jazz.)

For the fans threatened with jilting, though, it's no laughing matter: they can give up either a beloved team or a huge chunk of their precious municipal budget. Despite the promises of owners, cities generally don't see a great boost in commerce and revenue when they acquiesce to demands for ritzier parks, as economists at a recent Federal Reserve-sponsored conference in Atlanta pointed out. The owners, on the other hand, have nothing to lose and millions to gain. For Steinbrenner, a new ballpark at New Jersey's Meadowlands sports complex—say, a quirkily designed nostalgia park modeled on Baltimore's Camden Yards—would drench his team in money from yuppie families making an evening's entertainment of the game and from companies grabbing up season tickets and luxury skyboxes.

If Steinbrenner's motives are purely pecuniary—and, it must be admitted, there is a small chance of that—it won't be easy to keep him in the Bronx. The reason he says he's leaving, though, is that fans are shunning Yankee Stadium because the parking is a pain and the South Bronx neighborhood is seamy. Here, you can't help sensing a trace of disingenuousness. Parking headaches plague every major stadium, including the Meadowlands. And Steinbrenner's rap against the South Bronx is especially unfair. In recent years, crime rates in the neighborhood have fallen. The area has been reviving economically. And a recent evening's walk around the neighborhood revealed not a fearsome hotbed of crime but a patch of thriving and unthreatening street life.

As the September sunlight fades, Columbia University's Kenneth T. Jackson, editor of the newly published *Encyclopedia of New York*, a compendium of 4,300 entries about the city and its history, leads a crowd of some fifty students around the neighborhood, following a walking tour two Columbia baseball players designed for him as a class assignment. Strolling down the Grand Concourse, which runs north from 138th Street into the 200s, the group passes the Cardinal Hayes High School, one of the academically rigorous Catholic schools that Mayor Rudy Giuliani holds up as a model for the city's public schools; the school's graduates include Martin Scorcese, Regis Philbin and, more recently, Jamal Mashburn of the Dallas Mavericks.

Quiet but not unpeopled, the neighborhood seems a far cry from the urban jungle Tom Wolfe demonized in *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. Near the stadium, street vendors hawk back issues of *Ebony* and vinyl LPs of Gloria Gaynor and the *Shaft* soundtrack. Down on Walton Street, with its phalanx of graffitied but still handsome pre-war apartment buildings, a group of boys, 8 to 18, plays basketball, using a milk crate fastened to the bars of a window as their basket. As Professor Jackson strolls by in his blue windbreaker and Yankees cap, there is a flurry of excitement: the boys mistake him for Yankee Manager Buck Showalter.

Tonight, chilly after the sun goes down, six innings of scoreless ball pass by before Toronto's Shawn Green homers to give the Blue Jays a 1-0 lead. Then, in the bottom of the seventh, the Yankees come alive. With two men on base, one run already in and the dwindling

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crowd on its feet, right-fielder Paul O'Neill singles in Bernie Williams for the lead. Another run in the seventh and six more in the eighth seal the game. The Yankees inch their way toward the first-ever American League wild-card berth.

In the dirty but well-lit subway, the fans wait for the C-train back to Manhattan. After several minutes, word filters through the crowd that a fire on the tracks has delayed the C. Unfazed, the New Yorkers trot upstairs to catch the 4, which means only the small inconvenience of a transfer at 149th Street. A surprisingly large number of fans are riding the subway home; New York, after all, relies on public transportation more than any other city in the nation. Three different lines serve Yankee Stadium, surely a vote in favor of its continued use—even if New Jersey does build a deal-sweetening commuter rail out to the Meadowlands.

In the end, though, it's a matter of economics, and the economic arguments for keeping the Yankees in the Bronx are not overwhelming. The city already offered to pony up $600 million to build three new parking garages and a new bridge (that's right, a new bridge), but Steinbrenner thumbed his nose at the deal on September 5. The cash-strapped mayor isn't likely to shell out even more than that—perhaps upward of $1 billion—for a modest financial gain to the souvenir shops and greasy spoons along River Avenue. And even if Giuliani can coax Steinbrenner into staying for now, the lure of a Camden Yards-style nostalgia park, with spanking-new skyboxes and gourmet sandwich stands, won't go away. Financial arguments to keep the Yankees are doomed.

But a nostalgia park such as Camden Yards has its disadvantages, too. In Baltimore, fans, mostly white and wealthy enough to afford the higher ticket prices, scoot into nearby parking lots, make their way through the antiseptic passageways and settle into seats wiped by an usher (who then lingers for a tip). Chardonnay vendors walk the aisles selling splits. You'd never know you were in Baltimore.

Going to Yankee Stadium, on the other hand, means paying tribute to a city. For many Manhattanites, it's the only time they ever set foot in the Bronx. Even if they don't walk out to the Grand Concourse to see the old-folks' home, the one that used to be a posh hotel where Harry Truman stayed, there's still an unavoidable interaction with the neighborhood: riding the gritty subways, walking by the asphalt handball courts, turning your head and seeing, in a swish-pan, the variety of faces that make up urban life. You may keep your hand on your wallet, but you probably won't get hurt except by an errant foul ball. Like the other sports moguls, Steinbrenner may want to turn our national nostalgia-obsession into a fast buck. But the real vote for nostalgia, for sentiment, is to let the Yankees stay put.

DAVID GREENBERG, former TNR managing editor, is a Richard Hofstadter Fellow in American History at Columbia University.

The last conservative.

NUNN OF THE ABOVE

By John B. Judis

Since the late '50s, the term "conservative" has been applied to politicians whose agenda varies from the radical to the reactionary, from nuclear brinkmanship against the Soviet Union to the repeal of Social Security. But the term "conservative" also denotes a measured, deliberative approach to politics. America has always had these kind of conservatives. They have sometimes blocked innovation and promoted inaction, but they have also provided a needed counterweight to both right-wing and left-wing reformers.

Georgia Senator Sam Nunn's retirement is, of course, a blow to Democratic political hopes in the South, but it will also deprive the Senate of one of its most effective conservatives—and at a time when the institution is threatened by poll-driven Republican radicalism. Nunn's conservatism is practical and temperamental—his favorite term is "prudent." It is also peculiarly Southern—but more in the tradition of Georgia Whig Alexander Stephens than of Tennessee Democrat Andrew Jackson.

Although Nunn's forebears were Democrats, he is probably best understood as a New South Whig. He was raised in Perry, a small town south of Atlanta made prosperous in the '50s by the arrival of the Warner-Robins Air Force base. Nunn's ancestors were public officials and small farmers rather than plantation owners. His father served as mayor of Perry, and his great-uncle, Carl Vinson, was chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. After graduating from law school, Nunn returned to Perry where he became a pillar of the Methodist church and president of the Chamber of Commerce, serving on the biracial committee that achieved integration without suffering the tumult of other Southern towns.

Nunn's model for America has always been Perry writ large—a close-knit community overseen by its pastors and businessmen, one that Nunn himself described as a "large extended family." While Nunn's views on business regulation resembled those of many Republicans, he never displayed the frontier individualism of a Newt Gingrich or Phil Gramm. Nor did he trumpet the virtues of states' rights. His major contribution to social policy was the program for national service, which, in its original form, would have required anyone wanting financial assistance for college to serve in the community or military.

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Nunn's foreign policy—supportive of a strong military but cautious about its use—also represents a Whig strand of Southern conservatism. As Nunn explained to me in an interview last year, his hesitancy about committing America's military to battle was shaped initially by his understanding of the Civil War. Nunn was not raised to romanticize the "lost cause" of the South. Instead, he grew up believing that the "fire-eaters" who insisted on war and secession had doomed the region to a century of backwardness. Nunn explained, "It is lot easier to start something in an emotional period than it is to think through the implications of it. When you read Confederate history, you find that most of the real leaders that emerged after the hothead stage were people who, had it been up to them, would have been much more cautious about splitting the union in the beginning."

SAM NUNN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Nunn, like his other great influence, Georgia Senator Richard Russell, favored a strong defense as a means of preventing rather than waging war. He fought Jimmy Carter's plan to withdraw troops from South Korea in 1977 and championed the defense buildup that began in 1979. At the same time, Nunn opposed Reagan's interjection of troops into Lebanon in 1982, Bush's plan for an invasion of Kuwait in 1991 and Clinton's threat of armed intervention in Bosnia in spring 1993 and in Haiti last year.

Russell and Vinson also influenced Nunn's view of Congress. Nunn jealously guarded Congress's prerogatives, defying Democratic as well as Republican presidents. He fought Carter on Salt II, Reagan on the ABM (on the grounds that Reagan was repudiating the Senate's original interpretation of the treaty), Bush on the appointment of John Tower and Clinton on gays in the military. But he also held a strict view of the division of powers and resisted attempts to transfer final responsibility for foreign policy to Congress. Once Bush decided to intervene in Iraq and Clinton did in Haiti, he fully supported both their efforts. And, most recently, he argued against congressional efforts to dictate the exact terms of U.S. policy in Bosnia.

Like most Southern politicians who grew up under only one party, Nunn saw himself as above partisan combat. In the Senate, he was as likely to vote with Republicans as with Democrats, and most of his legislative initiatives were joint efforts with Republicans. He was the ultimate insider whose power rested on its discreet use and on his ability to command allegiance across the aisle. But as Nunn saw the Democratic Party began to founder nationally, he joined the Democratic Leadership Conference's effort to revive it. He began campaigning for other Democrats in the South, and in 1988 seriously considered running for president.

After the Gulf war, however, Nunn abandoned hope of becoming president and returned to his earlier bipartisan approach. He and Indiana Senator Richard Lugar got a reluctant Congress to fund the dismantling of Russian and Ukrainian nuclear facilities. He worked with New Mexico Senator Pete Domenici on an uncharacteristically sweeping reform of the tax code that would replace the income tax with a consumption tax.

Nunn was typically close-mouthed about his reasons for retiring, but they are evident from what he did and did not say in his announcement. Nunn's area of expertise in Congress has always been the military, but when he described the "challenges" facing America, he talked about domestic social policy. Well before the Republicans captured Congress last November, Nunn had begun to lose interest in the Armed Services Committee and was devoting his speeches to sex and violence on television and the breakdown of the family—areas in which he has neither particular expertise nor congressional authority. He told me eighteen months ago that he was seriously considering retirement.

In his retirement speech, Nunn criticized the power wielded by "the extremes in both parties" and the substitution of partisan bickering and cynical campaigning

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for "substantive debate." In his press conference afterwards, Nunn warned that the Republican revolution was hurtling down the tracks without heeding "red lights." Nunn has special reason to be disillusioned with the drift of congressional politics. For purely partisan reasons, Republicans are trying to eliminate Americorps, the pale shadow of his original national service program; and House Republican isolationists want to gut funding for the Nunn-Lugar nuclear disassembly program.

Nunn did not mention Clinton in his speech. He had sponsored Clinton to succeed him as chairman of the DLC and endorsed him for president in December 1991. He rested many of his own hopes for reviving the Democratic Party on Clinton. But Clinton's failure to advance the centrist model that Nunn helped pioneer, combined with the Republican victories in November 1994, probably convinced the Georgia Democrat that he had become a political anachronism. Nunn could have easily won re-election, but he would have been relegated to the role of gadfly and outsider—a role that does not suit him.

Of course, Nunn could have followed Alabama Senator Richard Shelby's example and changed parties, but he never considered it. Said one former aide, "He is too conservative to do something like that. He is as consistent as the tides." More important, Nunn is also deeply at odds with the thrust of the new congressional Republicans, who espouse a right-wing anarchism and follow the craven dictates of business lobbyists. Theirs is a conservatism that his was meant to combat, not to complement. •

How the O. J. trial will be remembered.

NOTES ON THE TRIAL OF THE CENTURY

By Diana Trilling

Although, like most of the white population of America, I think that O.J. Simpson murdered Nicole Brown and Ron Goldman, I was not surprised by his acquittal. Almost everyone here in New York with whom I have spoken about the case expected a hung jury; no one anticipated a conviction. Not only was the defendant a black sports hero; he was uncommonly charming, worldly, wealthy, and he was being tried in Rodney King country. Even at our distance from Los Angeles, the brutal beating of King, and its consequences both inside and outside the courtroom, was still fresh in our memory.

But if we were prepared for Simpson's acquittal, we were anything but prepared for the speed with which the jury reached its verdict. It had taken nine months to present the evidence in the case, much of it highly complicated; it was not possible for the jury to have sifted through it and deliberated on it in less than four hours. It was the speed of the verdict, suggesting as it did that the case had been decided more on the basis of race than on testimony, that sent a shock through the nation. Alert as we might be to the problems of race in present-day America, we had failed to realize that our racial discord had reached the point where it could announce itself this baldly and boldly.

Simpson is said to have sneered at Marcia Clark as he left the courtroom, a free man. By the speed with which the jury in this case reached its decision, it sneered at our legal system and the state, and at Judge Lance Ito, who had been so much its friend and sympathizer.

Confronted with the jury's racial solidarity, Simpson's lawyers have reminded us that it was integrated. There were nine black jurors but also two Caucasians and an Hispanic. In the press conference that juror Brenda Moran called on the day after the verdict, and again in a television interview, she offered us similar assurances: the jury was integrated. It may be, of course, that the nonblack minority in the jury deferred to reasonable arguments of its black majority, just as it may be that among the black jurors Ms. Moran was not unique for either her powers of persuasion or the force of her feeling for Simpson—we now know, for instance, that another of the jurors was once a Black Panther, and as he left the courtroom, he saluted Simpson with upraised fist. But as I watched Ms. Moran on television, I asked myself for how long I or anyone I knew could have withstood her.

I've been waiting for someone to mention the Dreyfus case in connection with the Simpson case but, to my knowledge, this has not yet happened. For France, the

DIANA TRILLING is the author most recently of *The Beginning of the Journey: The Marriage of Lionel & Diana Trilling* (Harcourt Brace).

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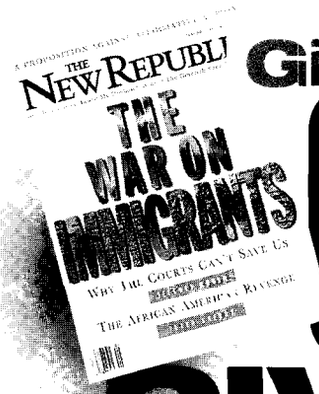

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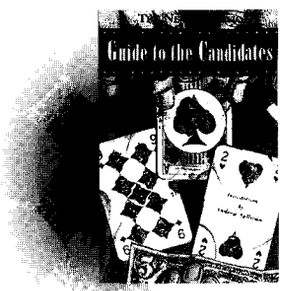

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Dreyfus case was its trial of the century. Dreyfus was a Jewish captain in the French army, and he was accused of spying for the Germans. France reeled under the impact of his trial. He was found guilty as charged and sent to Devil's Island in 1895 where he remained for more than a decade until eventually, after a retrial in which he was again declared guilty, he was pardoned. The rift in French society caused by the Dreyfus case forms a central theme in Proust's great novel, *Remembrance of Things Past*; just as a madeleine triggered his personal memory, the Dreyfus case triggered his social memory. Good books will no doubt be written about the Simpson case, but will it ever produce the monumental work of fiction that it demands? I suspect that for a Simpson novel to be truly great it will have to be written by a black writer who, while transcending the divisions of color, will bring to the story all the racial pain that went into its making. To me, a white viewer, the fever of delight with which the students of Howard University greeted Simpson's acquittal was the most disturbing feature of the trial. The students hugged each other and jumped with joy, like witnesses at the fall of the Bastille.

Was Johnnie Cochran guilty of incitement in his final address to the jury? While the summation of evidence was presented by Barry Scheck, the main thrust of Cochran's argument was its impassioned appeal to the jury to carry the message of racial injustice to the world and to help restore the American Constitution. But where was the American Constitution threatened in the Simpson trial? In what way was Simpson deprived of his constitutional rights? By his own admission, Mark Fuhrman was in violation of the Constitution—he told an aspiring screenwriter that when it suited his purpose he planted evidence against black suspects. With other members of the Los Angeles police department, he was accused by the defense of having planted evidence against Simpson. But though repeatedly stated, this theory was never proved. Defense counsel did not invent Mark Fuhrman. Fuhrman and his kind exist. But it is important to keep in mind that, whatever discrimination is practiced against blacks in our country, the story of Simpson's victimization by the police was the creation of his counsel. This represented a cruel play upon the feelings of black Americans, adding a bad dream to bad-enough reality.

Judge Ito is said to regard the Simpson trial as the best and worst experience of his life. He is most usefully viewed, I think, as an archetypal product of our progressive culture. I do not mean this as wholly discreditable—there is much to be praised in his unyielding effort to be fair-minded, but his wish not merely to *be* fair-minded but to be *perceived* as fair-minded caused this trial to last twice as long as it should have. He ran the trial like the permissive parent of a rambunctious household, teetering back and forth between indulgence and discipline and demonstrating in the process that permissiveness is of as little service in a courtroom as in the rearing of children. Although he often seemed to lack sufficient awareness of his authority, he could also seem overly conscious of it, but with what D.H. Lawrence would have called "mental consciousness" rather than "blood consciousness." To the end, his personal uncertainty encouraged the lawyers to flout his orders: although during closing argument he cautioned the lawyers on both sides against grimaces or other shows of displeasure with the statements of their opponents and warned that any such demonstration would be severely punished, not moments later Barry Scheck returned to his elaborate head shakings and facial expressions of dismay with nothing done to stop him.

At the end of the trial, Judge Ito repeatedly instructed the jury in its duty to weigh all the evidence with which it had been presented. But the jurors were also instructed that where there was reasonable doubt on a single issue, it warranted acquittal. Does this mean that the chain of evidence in a criminal trial is no stronger than its weakest link?

According to juror Moran, it was the testimony of Allan Park, the driver who came to take Simpson to the airport, which provided the jury with its reasonable doubt. I myself saw nothing to doubt in Park's testimony; no one having answered the doorbell at Simpson's Rockingham residence, Park had waited for him to appear. While waiting, he saw a black man of Simpson's height and build, dressed in dark clothes, enter the house. He saw no white Bronco at the Rockingham address. In her summation, Marcia Clark reasonably described Park's testimony as testimony which no one had questioned or could question.

I am trying to recollect who it was who first spoke of the "l"-word. Probably it was someone in Washington; perhaps it was Dan Quayle. (Remember him?) The Simpson trial acquainted us with a new obfuscation, the "n"-word. No one has yet thought to introduce the "m"-word into our vocabulary, but we have need of it. Certainly money was everywhere in this trial: the lawyers' fees, the costs to both sides for their team of investigators and researchers, the expensive exhibits, the fees to the expert witnesses. On one of the nightly programs which Larry King devoted to the case, he bravely brought up this neglected subject with Simpson's close friend Robert Kardashian. He asked Kardashian how much O.J. had spent on the trial. O.J. couldn't be luckier than to have a friend as steadfast as Kardashian. Without a quiver, he conceded that it had probably been more than a million. More than a million, indeed! Closer, I should guess, to $10 million.

It was worth every penny, of course, if it bought Simpson his freedom. But how could this trial have failed to communicate to the world how important it is to be rich if one is going to come up against the law? We can only speculate upon how many mean deals may have been cut for impoverished criminals or how many sent

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to jail while Simpson sat in court surrounded by his dream team of lawyers. We have often heard it said that there is one system of justice for the rich and another for the poor. We have now had nine months in which to contemplate the truth of this cynical statement.

Since the close of the Simpson trial, we have heard many proposals for change in our legal system: the sequestration of jurors must be abolished; a jury must no longer be required to reach a unanimous decision; new rules for the presentation of evidence must be formulated in order to save time in a trial. I have suggestions of my own. They have to do with the "m"-word. I propose that not only all lawyers involved in a trial but all expert witnesses be required to declare at the start what they are being paid for their services. Mr. Herbert MacDonell—Professor MacDonell, as this expert in blood spatters prefers to be called—was candid enough to admit on the witness stand that he had already been paid $10,500 and that be would be receiving more. He made this admission without embarrassment, and I liked him for his frank acknowledgment that he was in the blood business for the "m."

Robert Heidstra earns his modest living by detailing cars in the Brentwood vicinity. He was called by the defense, but he uncomfortably developed into a witness for the prosecution when he reported that, walking his dogs on the night of the murders, he was in the alley at the rear of Nicole's condo and heard a youthful male voice say, "Hey, hey, hey!" On cross-examination it was disclosed that he had also heard an older male voice, that of a black person. The reference to a black voice drew from Johnnie Cochran the hottest passion of this heated trial. How, he demanded of Judge Ito, was such blatant racism possible in this country at this point in time?

Cochran's rage was perhaps fueled by the fact that Heidstra had also testified that he heard the rear gate on Nicole's property being shut and that he had seen a white car or van—yes, it could have been a Bronco—speed away from the scene.

But even with this provocation, Cochran's protest was absurd. In an enlightened society, is one not to be permitted to recognize a national or regional or racial accent? Are we no longer to be allowed to identify a French person or an Italian by his speech, or an American Southerner?

Although what Christopher Darden elicited in his cross-examination of Heidstra remained on the record, the sound of a black male voice was not again referred to in the trial, not even by Marcia Clark in her summation.

It it my guess that Simpson is convinced that he didn't murder his former wife and her friend Goldman. He may be a gifted actor, but it is not on his acting ability that his management of himself now relies. I believe that he is now in denial, deepest denial—I use the word as it is used in psychoanalysis to connote the complete eradication of fact. For this reason, he is able to convince those who are close to him of his guiltlessness. Whether we realize it or not, we all of us employ this phenomenon of denial in our lives. When it is too disturbing for us to admit something into our consciousness, we blot it out as if it had never been. We all of us have had the experience of accusing someone of a wrongdoing and having this wrongdoing denied. The person who denies our charge is most frequently speaking the truth as he now sees it. He is in psychological denial. While this may be viewed as a pathology, it exists as a psychological safety net for even the sanest and most competent of us. The mechanism comes into use without our conscious dictate.

Yet, even if we accept the premise that Simpson is no longer conscious of what actually took place on the night of June 12, 1994, we have also to understand that there remains to him the entire consciousness that his former wife, the mother of two of his children, was brutally slaughtered. During the trial, he was careful to look away from the screen when the details of the murder were too vividly displayed. But how do we account for his demeanor (that much-worn word) when he tried on the glove before the jury? The glove was soaked with Nicole's blood, yet he smiled broadly at its apparent misfit—it provided him with his moment of triumph over the prosecution. I was reminded of Jean Harris studying the blood stains on the bed sheets of her murdered lover, Dr. Herman Tarnower. Mrs. Harris didn't smile as she examined the bedclothes, which were soaked with her lover's blood, but she had no hesitation in handling them. Psychiatry also identified such inappropriate emotional detachment: it represents a lack of affect.

In the last days of the trial, Johnnie Cochran had bodyguards in court, five members of the Nation of Islam. He said that he had received death threats. Questioned on television after the trial, he shrugged off the suggestion that there might be political significance in this connection with Farrakhan.

I am returned to the racial tensions of the late '60s. For several weeks at the close of that decade, there hung down the side of the Riverside Church a huge banner demanding $5 million in reparations for blacks. I live near the Riverside Church, and as I passed this banner each day I thought of my father and of how, were he alive, he would respond to it. My father was born and reared in Warsaw. As a child in the late nineteenth century, he had known persecution. Did the Poles owe him reparation for their mistreatment of the Jews? Do the Poles owe me reparation for their treatment of my father? I speak, of course, not of repayment of property rights but only of the infringement upon human decency.

The political repercussions of Simpson's trial have yet to manifest themselves. President Clinton spoke promptly and sensibly: the decision of the jury must be

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respected; it was a time for racial healing; an end must be put to spousal abuse. Jesse Jackson appeared on television, but disastrously; it was clear that he had been left behind by the fast current of public events. Meanwhile, those most communicating of public characters, Dole and Gingrich, were suddenly all but silent.

In all the stir and fuss of these last days, it has been Colin Powell for whom we have waited. By a miracle he was able to stay out of sight and yet move to the forefront of public attention at one and the same moment. Everywhere it is Powell who is put forward as the healer that Robert Kennedy might have been, that Clinton has failed to be, that now perhaps no white person is capable of being. But if the Simpson case presents Powell with the political opportunity of a lifetime, it also prevents him with the dilemma of a lifetime. He is a moderate man. Will anyone of moderate voice be listened to in the months and years to come, or even dare to speak? (Powell's response to Farrakhan's invitation to the Nation of Islam's Million Man March—that he would be out of town at the time, but agreed with the event's "purpose"—is not exactly reassuring.) Has the Simpson case left us with only the response of fear and stridency?

More than hope lay behind the civil rights movement of the '60s. This social revolution of our time was importantly fueled by white liberal guilt and black anger. It also had its infusion of fear. We never intended ourselves to be led where we have been led by this explosive mixture nor, unhappily, have our last thirty years enabled us to separate out the explosive elements in this progressive movement or shown us how to bring them under intelligent control.

Neither Brenda Moran nor Robert Kardashian seems to be touched by the violence that was visited upon Nicole by her husband. This was made plain to us in their television interviews. It would appear that they consign the pictures of Nicole's battered face and the soundtrack of her anguished calls for help to the dustbin of history.

Until Simpson's trial, I had had but a single experience of a courtroom, and that was Jean Harris's trial for the murder of the Scarsdale diet doctor. I was writing a book about the case and attended the trial each day. It was held in the White Plains Courthouse and lasted for the better part of a year. In fact, as of that date it was the longest murder trial in the history of New York state.

The two trials are notably unrelated by rule or tradition. There was no racial element in the Harris case and no cameras in the White Plains courtroom, and that made a difference. Still, it was a famous trial and a major media event. The press rows were a tight squeeze, and there were as many spectators at the trial as the spacious courtroom could accommodate. Especially as the trial neared its close, the lobby of the courthouse became jammed with sightseers, reporters, camera people eager to catch a glimpse of the defendant entering or leaving the building.

Despite the popularity of the Harris case, there was a decorousness in the White Plains courtroom which one longed to see reproduced in Judge Ito's court. Only one lawyer appeared for each side, and this was a help. But it cannot account for the mood of courtesy and quiet seriousness that was maintained in White Plains but that was so dismayingly absent in Los Angeles. The opposing attorneys in the Harris trial never addressed each other except in entire politeness, and they never addressed the judge except with deference. The judge never scolded opposing counsel or threatened them with punishment—he had no reason to. No one played to the jury as Barry Scheck so openly did throughout the Simpson trial. Nothing of a personal nature intruded itself upon the legal situation. Everyone in the White Plains courtroom—judge, counsel, defendant, witnesses, scientific experts—was quietly, unostentatiously respectful of the power and dignity of the law.

Where has this decorousness disappeared to? How has it happened that in the space of fourteen years a criminal trial has come to be generally viewed as a circus? Were the bad manners of the attorneys in this trial an accurate reflection of a general deterioration of manners in the last decade and a half? This is frightening to think about.

Even more frightening, however, is the thought that with the passage of these few years we have lost this much of our respect for our legal system. Law is the foundation of our society and the guarantor of the rights which we all of us are supposed to cherish and guard. Without it, tyrants can exist but democracy cannot. If the Simpson trial teaches us nothing else, surely it must remind us of the root connection between civility and the sustaining processes of law. •

The U.N.'s disastrous humanitarianism.

AID AND ABET

By Peter Beinart

Discouraged by the U.N.'s irrelevance to the great military and political contests of its time, globalists often resort to a backup line of defense. Since the U.N. is not sovereign and lacks the ability to tax and conscript, they say, it cannot act as a world policeman. But that's okay because its true value lies in the less glamorous sphere of "low politics," where it manifests global conscience by delivering humanitarian relief to desperate populations: the U.N. as world social worker. The argument is morally resonant, especially when made by the Third World governments whose populations the U.N. succors. Unfortunately, how-

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

The Calvert Program

How can we raise the achievement of poor, minority students in urban schools? That's a question that parents and teachers all over the country are asking. It looks as though Barclay, an elementary school in one of Baltimore's poorest neighborhoods, has found an answer.

Four years ago, the Barclay School started using a program that Calvert, a Baltimore private school, had developed for its students. Barclay is 94 percent minority, and its students come mainly from poor, African-American families. Before the Calvert program, their achievement was in the cellar. For example, average reading scores for students in grades 2 to 4 were in the low 20th percentile. Now, they are consistently at or above the 50th percentile. And the program has been expanded to Carter G. Woodson, another Baltimore elementary school in a similar kind of neighborhood. What is so special about the Calvert program?

Youngsters do math and write every day, and they spend a lot of time reading.

For one thing, teachers and students know exactly what is expected of them. The curriculum, which emphasizes reading, writing, and mathematics, is outlined grade by grade. First-grade teachers know that, in math, for example, they will be expected to teach "reading and writing 1- and 2-digit numbers to 100; money: work with all coins; ...place value; shapes (circle, square, rectangle, triangle, sphere, cone, cylinder, cube)," etc. In fact, teachers even know what material to cover on a given day because a lesson plan tells them and lays out a proven method for presenting it. Here's an introduction to bar graphs from day 19:

> Tell the child that a bar graph is a drawing that shows the comparison between numbers of things. Point to the pictures of the items on the top of p. 42. Explain that one way to keep track of how many things we have is to put them in the form of a graph. Have the child count the number of boots in the picture. Then in the graph show the child how there is 1 block colored for each boot. Next he is to count the hats and color 1 block for each hat. Do the same for all items.
>
> When the graph is complete, the pupil should be able to tell easily by looking instead of counting that there are the most horseshoes, the least guitars, that there are more hats than boots, etc.

This is a far cry from the curriculums made up of vague lists of "skills," which leave a teacher wondering where to begin and where to end. Or from the encyclopedic curriculums, so packed that it would be impossible to cover all the topics. Teachers can teach the Calvert curriculum's material in the time allotted—and they are expected to. As a result, second-grade teachers, for example, don't wonder whether their students are familiar with "place value." They *know* that students have been presented with this material, and they know the scope of the presentation. So they can start building immediately on what children learned the year before.

The expectations for students are not a set of psychological traits to be evaluated by the teacher; they are embodied in the curriculum. Youngsters do math and write every day, and they spend a lot of time reading. No work is considered done until it is error free, so students spend time each morning getting yesterday's work letter perfect. When they finish a piece of work, it goes into a folder, so students have a record of what they have accomplished, and every month they take this home to show their parents.

This sounds like an excellent and traditional liberal arts curriculum—and it is. The Calvert program has been in existence since 1905. That means that a lot of collective wisdom has gone into perfecting it. But it's not enough to have a good program; you have to make sure it is carried out.

Many reforms are adopted without the time or resources to make them work. Teachers get a couple of workshops at the beginning and a brief follow-up later in the year. Basically, they are on their own. In contrast, Calvert's plan for carrying out its program is as well thought-out as the program itself.

When the Calvert program came to Barclay, it was implemented first in grades K-1 and then in one grade per year. So most teachers had a chance to see the program in action before deciding whether they wanted to participate. As a result, the teachers who have chosen to stay are nearly all committed to making the program a success. The training itself for each grade began with a two-week seminar during the summer, and it continued during the school year. A full-time coordinator talked with individual teachers about how to teach specific lessons. She helped them to analyze their successes and failures and, often, to rethink the techniques they were using.

It's no mystery why Barclay students are succeeding. The Calvert program combines a curriculum that has been refined over the years, with the training and support that teachers need to use it. This is a winning combination, and it's one that more schools need to try.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1995 by Albert Shanker.

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ever, in responding to human catastrophes, the U.N. consistently proves less resourceful, less honest and less brave than private aid organizations and national relief agencies. And this, of course, is precisely why it wins praise from those Third World leaders responsible for such catastrophes, leaders whose hold on power depends precisely on foreign humanitarians being neither resourceful nor honest, nor brave. A few examples.

Ethiopia. Although Addis Ababa hosted one of the largest concentrations of permanent U.N. staff in Africa, the U.N. reacted slowly to the famine building in the Ethiopian countryside in the early 1980s. By 1982, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) such as World Vision Relief and Catholic Relief Services were sounding alarm bells—redirecting their own resources to Ethiopia and asking the U.S. government for more. By contrast, the U.N. Disaster Relief Organization and the U.N. International Children's Fund did not launch appeals until the spring of 1983, and bureaucratic infighting between key U.N. agencies such as the World Food Program and the Food and Agricultural Organization kept them from publishing a report on the situation until June 1984. Even then, the report gravely underestimated the extent of the crisis. In his book *Reluctant Aid or Aiding the Reluctant,* Steven Varnis estimates that the U.N. did not fully mobilize until November 1984, thereby missing the chance to stem the hunger before it reached epidemic proportions.

But the real problem was less the U.N.'s failure to mobilize quickly than the nature of the mobilization itself. The Ethiopian government of Mengistu Haile Mariam faced a rebellion in the northern province of Tigray. But Mengistu denied both that his regime had lost control of the province and that its inhabitants faced starvation. As a result, the government distributed less than 6 percent of its aid to a province that included one-third of those at risk from starvation.

Confronted with a host government unable and unwilling to grant them access to hundreds of thousands of its starving citizens, or even to acknowledge their existence, NGOs improvised. Norwegian Church Aid and other Protestant relief organizations, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), secretly funneled food from the Sudan into rebel-held areas in the Ethiopian north. The effort was bold and ingenious. Never before had aid groups transported such large stores of food across a border without the knowledge of the host government. The rebel-led welfare networks, which the NGOs assisted, constituted, in the words of the watchdog group African Rights, "the most effective relief programs ever mounted in a political emergency in Africa."

The U.N.'s response could not have been more different. Its Emergency Office for Ethiopia not only made no effort to reach the starving in rebel-held areas, it also legitimized Mengistu's claim that they did not exist. In August 1985, an Emergency Office report claimed that the government and the NGOs operating under its auspices were reaching 75 percent of the needy in Tigray. The actual figure was less than 15 percent. The office ignored repeated findings from journalists and independent monitors that as much as one-half to two-thirds of the food it gave the government for Tigray and the neighboring province of Eritrea was being diverted to the military. Says Alex de Waal, former co-director of Human Rights Watch-Africa: "It was criminal.... The U.N.'s role in that [cover-up] cost many lives and strengthened Mengistu. The government would have fallen years earlier without their help."

Somalia. In January 1991, when dictator Mohammed Siad Barré fled Mogadishu, leaving chaotic inter-clan warfare in his wake, the U.N. fled as well. For almost all of 1991, as the situation deteriorated and anarchy turned to mass starvation, the U.N. stayed away. Meanwhile five private relief agencies, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, remained in Mogadishu. In December, Pierre Glassmann, the African Delegate-General for the Red Cross, demanded to know, "How come UNICEF-Somalia has thirteen people in Nairobi and no one in Somalia?" Marco Barsotti of the United Nations Development Program responded astoundingly, "In a situation of war, we don't operate."

NGOs, particularly the Red Cross, stepped into the breach. Rather than wasting time developing new relief strategies, the Red Cross built upon local knowledge, essentially merging with the indigenous Somali Red Crescent Society. When a Somali woman, Dhababo Isse, found that cooked food was less often stolen by local militias because it could not be easily sold, the Red Cross used her soup kitchens as its national model. And rather than letting food pile up in warehouses in Mogadishu and Kismayo, where it was subject to the whim of local warlords, the Red Cross spread its deliveries across every port, and even some beaches, in southern Somalia.

Even when the U.N. began operations, almost a year later, they quickly became a fiasco. The U.N.'s World Food Program let large stores of food sit in the Mogadishu port while it worked out a complex distribution system, only to find them repeatedly looted. The U.N. Development Program left $68 million of its Somalia budget unspent for nine crucial months during 1992 because it lacked the signature of a nonexistent Somali official. UNHCR and the World Food Program bickered for three months over a contract to distribute food by truck to a Somali refugee camp in the Hararghe region of Ethiopia, while in the camp fifty refugees died per day. The contrast with the Red Cross—which in 1991 and 1992 fed roughly 1.5 million people, more than all the U.N. agencies combined—could not be sharper.

Rwanda. In Rwanda, the U.N. is not leaving people to starve as it did in Ethiopia and Somalia. Yet its policies there may be sowing the seeds of future humanitarian disaster even as they prevent one today. Stung by its peacekeepers' hasty exit in the midst of one of the century's worst genocides, the U.N. last year moved quickly to provide for the mass of Hutu refugees streaming out of Rwanda ahead of the

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Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front. Yet even as the U.N. helped care for hundreds of thousands of Rwandan refugees, chronic interagency infighting and a myopic determination to remain "apolitical" stymied any attempt to identify and bring to justice those who had been responsible for the slaughter. One year later, the result is that former government militias, often armed and sometimes in uniform, control many U.N. refugee camps, terrorizing civilians and plotting to reinvade.

To be sure, private aid groups face the same excruciating dilemma of whether to deny food and medicine to hungry suspected murderers. But U.N. agencies have been the least willing to take steps to separate the ringleaders from those on whom they prey. Christine Umutoni, Deputy Minister for Rehabilitation and Reintegration in Rwanda's new government, berates the U.N. for being "unwilling to take the steps necessary, through a special police force, to keep the killers away from the refugees." Janet Fleischmann of Human Rights Watch-Africa notes, "The U.N. clearly took the lead in assisting these refugees who were in uniform and armed ... and that helped them establish control over the refugee camps." In protest, *Médecins sans Frontières*, along with several other NGOs, has begun pulling out of militia-controlled refugee camps in Zaire.

Meanwhile, the U.N. has spent less than half as much money on humanitarian and development efforts in devastated Rwanda itself as it has in the refugee camps. In July, Richard McCall, USAID chief of staff, accused the U.N. of "doing a miserable job" of helping the new government. While U.N. officials complain that Western donors have not given them adequate resources, dumping more money into militia-controlled refugee camps might only hasten the day when the perpetrators of Rwanda's 1994 genocide reclaim their country.

The chief failing of the U.N. aid agencies is not that they are clumsy and lethargic but that they are dishonest. To maintain the support of the continent's leaders, they cling to the fiction that Africans suffer not from murderous government but from murderous weather. And since humans are not responsible for Africa's ills, they can pretend that humanitarian work need not require political and moral confrontation. The U.N. should have abandoned this conceit a decade ago, after its experience in Ethiopia. Because it did not, Rwanda's current peace may prove little more than a lull between killing seasons. •

The case for old-style diplomacy.

TWILIGHT OF THE U.N.

By Michael Lind

In the summer of this year, the U.N. suffered the greatest humiliation of its half-century history. Bosnian Serbs lashed U.N. peacekeepers to flagpoles, as human shields to ward off NATO air strikes, while desperate Bosnian Muslims looted the arsenals of other U.N. blue helmets for weapons to defend themselves. Then, in July, Bosnian Serbs overran the towns of Srebrenica and Zepa, "safe areas" that were not safe, protected by U.N. peacekeepers incapable of keeping the peace. The contrast between these scenes of U.N. impotence and the recent NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb artillery positions has the clarity of allegory. In the eyes of perceptive observers the United Nations and the philosophy of collective security that it embodies have been finally and completely discredited.

This conclusion will be resisted, of course, by Wilsonian globalists in the United States. During the half century since the end of World War II, globalists have used their predominance in the U.S. foreign policy elite and the prestige media to propagate the notion that there are only two schools of thought about foreign policy in the United States—"internationalism," the philosophy of moral, educated people, and "isolationism," the philosophy of xenophobic, ignorant know-nothings. "Internationalism," moreover, is usually thought to be intimately bound up with the project of subordinating sovereign states to international organizations, of which the United Nations is the archetype. Thus the syllogism of American globalism: he who is against xenophobic isolationism must be for liberal internationalism; he who is for liberal internationalism must support the United Nations; ergo, he who opposes the United Nations must be a xenophobic isolationist. On one side, the party of enlightened Cro-Magnons standing in the U.N. plaza; on the other, the slope-headed Neanderthals with clubs raised, ready to isolate America from the world.

The choice, though, is not that simple. There are not two enduring schools of thought in American foreign policy, but three. The vague category of "international-

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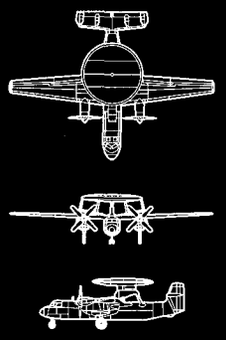

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ism" includes two different—indeed, irreconcilable—philosophies of international relations: Wilsonian globalism and national-interest realism. In the conflicts of the twentieth century, American globalists and realists have often allied against American isolationists. Even when they have cooperated, however, globalists and realists have promoted different goals for the United States.

Extreme globalists see the United States and other states as potential provinces of some supra-national confederation of the distant future. Most contemporary globalists, however, hope the human race will one day be bound together not by global bureaucracy but by global trade or global communications. Both types believe that military and economic conflict between sovereign states, like slavery, will fade away as humanity progresses to a higher level of social organization and even morality.

Realists, by contrast, view organized violence as the foundation for both world order and domestic political order. They do not necessarily believe in a balance of power among sovereign states; a realist could endorse a world empire. But that hypothetical world empire would be akin to the regional empires of the past, possessing the means, if necessary, to crush independence movements by force. In the twentieth century, American realists have included thinkers such as George Kennan and Walter Lippmann, who wanted the U.S. to prevent other great powers from exercising world dominion, and others who wanted the U.S. to exercise such dominion itself or in concert with other great powers. A great-power concert or condominium, that is, a world empire shared by several powers, is no more to be confused with a genuine collective-security system than an oligopoly with a free market.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt preferred the idea of a global great-power concert orchestrated by the United States to the equally realist but less ambitious conception of a global balance of power. FDR is often criticized for having had vague ideas about how the world should be organized after World War II. In fact his ideas were not so much vague as unpalatable to Wilsonian globalists, then and now. In 1941, he told an envoy to the Vatican that he did not wish "to reconstitute a League of Nations which, because of its size, makes for disagreement and inaction. There should be a meeting place of nations for the purpose of full discussion, but for management there seems no reason why the principle of trusteeship in private affairs should not be extended to the international field." Increasingly FDR favored a post-war great-power concert of the Big Four: the U.S., the British empire, the Soviet Union and Nationalist China (which in practice would have been an American client). The defeated Axis nations were to be disarmed, and the victors would monopolize military power. In December 1942, FDR told *The Saturday Evening Post* that small states "may as well disarm" because international security "rests with the powers who have the military force to uphold it."

FDR had in mind regional spheres of influence, not a global great-power directorate with universal interests. Each of the four great powers would "police" the lesser countries in its geographic region while contributing to joint four-power bomber squadrons, situated on international bases, which would punish countries that the great powers defined as "aggressors." According to historian Robert C. Hildebrand, "Roosevelt thought that American land forces could be sent to trouble spots in the Western hemisphere, but that only naval and air forces which were manned by voluntary enlistment, should be employed in other areas of the world" (a politically shrewd approach that would have prevented the domestic outrage over the deaths of conscripts in Vietnam). In order to minimize the resemblance of his new concert to the discredited League of Nations, FDR wanted the four-power "management" of the postwar U.N. to be located apart from the universal-membership assembly—preferably on an island base in the Azores or Hawaii.

FDR's postwar vision of regional great-power blocs, imposing peace in their own neighborhoods most of the time and collaborating only in emergencies, was shared by that other great realist, Winston Churchill. Like FDR, Churchill was more interested in winning the war than in drawing up plans for the postwar world (he brushed off a request from the Foreign Office to pay more attention to postwar planning by recommending that it "not overlook Mrs. Glass's *Cookery Book* recipe for Jugged Hare—'First catch your hare.' ") On March 21, 1943, Churchill revealed his bias toward a regional rather than global arrangement of international authority by proposing the creation of "a Council of Europe and a Council of Asia."

The alternative to the Roosevelt-Churchill view of a concert of regional great-power blocs was universalism. The war would have been fought in vain, the globalists believed, if a world legislature, universal collective security and global free trade did not replace spheres of influence and preferential trading blocs (which often were, and are, blamed inaccurately for the Depression and World War II). In the United States, the most important advocate of this view was the elderly Secretary of State Cordell Hull, a former Tennessee senator and fervent Wilsonian.

FDR, who distrusted Hull on this issue, assigned responsibility for postwar planning to Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, who promoted FDR's idea of "the four policemen." In 1943 Hull connived to force Welles's resignation after Welles was exposed as a homosexual. With Welles gone, and FDR concentrating on winning the war, Hull pushed through his Wilsonian plan for postwar security based on a revival of the League of Nations under a different name. By the time American, British, Soviet and Chinese diplomats gathered at Dumbarton Oaks in Georgetown in the summer of 1944 to discuss postwar planning, the U.S. proposal for the United Nations envisioned an organization little.different from the League, with a General Assembly, an executive council (the Security Council) and a Secretariat.

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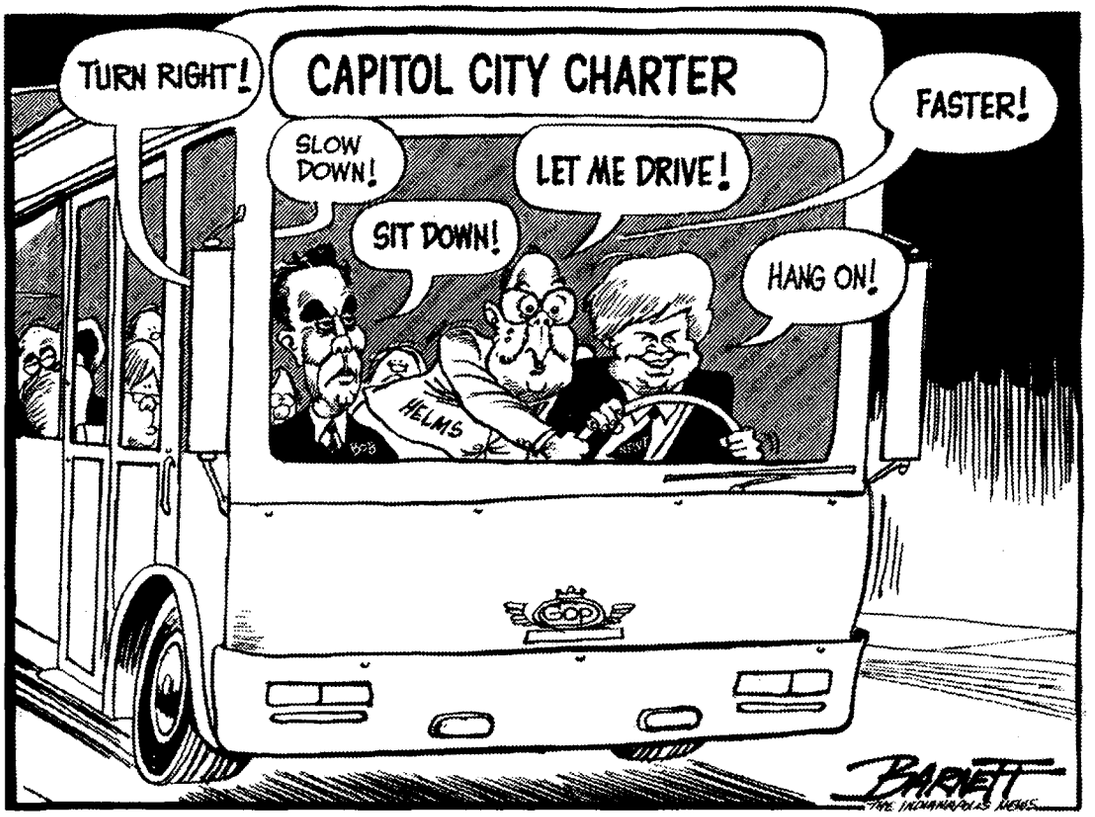

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The chief difference between the old League of Nations and its new incarnation involved the veto. The League had been paralyzed by the fact that any member could veto any action; Japan, for example, had vetoed League action against its invasion of Manchuria. The Dumbarton Oaks conferees limited the veto to the permanent members. At Soviet insistence, the veto was made absolute. The debate over this provision took place against the backdrop of the Soviet Union's consolidation of control over Eastern Europe and the growing split between the USSR and the Anglo-American alliance; the U.S. conceded the absolute veto to placate the increasingly hostile Soviets.

George Kennan, the second-highest U.S. official in Moscow, predicted that the East-West division would render the U.N. stillborn. He argued that the U.S. should use Soviet intransigence over the veto question as an excuse to "bury" the whole idea and instead draw a line defending Western Europe from Soviet expansion. Kennan recognized that the rivalry between the Soviet Union and the West would prevent the institutionalization of the World War II alliance and, therefore, not only doom the emerging Wilsonian U.N. but prevent any recourse to FDR's realist model as well. In fact, the most successful international security organization of the postwar period was one that was not envisioned by the diplomats at Dumbarton Oaks. It was NATO: an old-fashioned alliance that balanced the Soviet Union by restricting its geographic sphere of influence until Soviet communism was overthrown by Russian nationalists.

KURT WALDHEIM, BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI AND JAVIER PEREZ DE CUELLAR BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

During the cold war, the U.N., while irrelevant to the real superpower conflict, served as an arena for rhetorical conflict instead. For much of its fifty-year history the organization was the world's leading forum for anti-American and anti-Western agitation by the Soviets and their allies. Soviet influence at the U.N. grew gradually over time. Postwar plans for continued Western-Soviet collaboration in international peacekeeping broke down immediately. The Soviets began aggressively using the veto in support of their client states (they failed to veto the Security Council resolution against their client North Korea only because they were boycotting the Security Council on behalf of another client, the People's Republic of China, which demanded the seat then held by Taiwan). Soviet influence in the General Assembly—initially stacked with pro-U.S. countries in Latin America—grew rapidly in the 1960s as a result of decolonization.

Self-determination, it soon became clear, was a right limited to those rebelling against European colonial masters, not against successor elites in the Third World. The U.N.'s Congo mission of 1960-1964—the most disastrous U.N. intervention until the Balkan debacle—led to the use of U.N. troops as auxiliaries for the Soviet-backed central government of the Congo, which crushed the breakaway province of Katanga. The U.N.'s bloody assistance to the central government helped usher in one of Africa's most vicious kleptocrats, Mobutu Sese Seko.

By the 1970s, the U.N. General Assembly had become the leading forum for ritualized denunciation of the West and its allies by the Soviet and Third World blocs. The majority in the General Assembly that denounced Zionism as a form of racism took no action to denounce the human rights violations routinely committed by Arab governments. As head of the Organization for African Unity, Idi Amin was rapturously applauded by the General Assembly, and the genocide in Rwanda and Burundi was ignored by the same bloc in the assembly that singled out South African apartheid. U.S. ambassadors to the United Nations Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Jeanne Kirkpatrick became political heroes for many in the U.S. simply by countering the constant stream of vilification directed at this country.

When they were not denouncing the U.S. and its allies, the U.N.'s majority bloc devised schemes for the one-way transfer of wealth from the industrial democracies to their own regimes ("the new international economic order") and for muzzling the free Western press

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("the new international information order"). The Law of the Sea Treaty, which the Reagan administration wisely torpedoed, is a baroque monument of the *tiers-mondiste* era at the United Nations. The treaty would have shared the profits of Western mining of the unclaimed sea-floor with Third World countries like Chad, under the theory that the riches of the ocean were the common property of all mankind (by this theory, American fishermen should share a portion of their catch with the landlocked Swiss). International bureaucracy achieved a rococo efflorescence in the agencies enumerated in the Law of the Sea: a multinational government-owned corporation called The Enterprise, an International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (complete with a Sea-Bed Disputes Chamber), and—not least—an International Sea-Bed Authority, with an assembly and council of thirty-six members elected by the assembly. While this elaborate machinery, by discouraging entrepreneurial companies, would have defeated its explicit purpose of developing ocean resources, it would have accomplished its unstated purpose: providing still more opportunities for employing the cronies and clients of Third World authoritarian rulers.

The corruption of the idea of international organization at the United Nations was inevitably accompanied by the corruption of its bureaucracy. Under Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow of Senegal, who served from 1974 to 1987, UNESCO became so riddled with inefficiency and so addicted to anti-Western propaganda that the U.S., the major donor, and Britain withdrew in disgust. What M'Bow did to the credibility of UNESCO, Kurt Waldheim had done earlier to that of the United Nations.

A respected European statesman with a secret Nazi past becomes Secretary-General of the United Nations and consistently shows favoritism toward the Soviet Union, which possesses the means to incriminate him—it sounds like the plot of a second-rate thriller, but it actually happened. "It is not in the interest of the United Nations to get involved in this political aspect," Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim told *The New York Times* in 1975, dismissing suggestions that the U.N. protest the mistreatment of refugees by the communist government of North Vietnam. "The criticism comes from the West exclusively.... The rest of the world seems satisfied." As Shirley Hazzard pointed out in *The Countenance of Truth: The United Nations and the Waldheim Case*, the League of Nations had similarly refused to protest the treatment of Jews in Nazi Germany after 1933. Waldheim was thwarted in his search for a third term in 1982. Although the full extent of his participation in Nazi atrocities was not revealed until 1986, Stephen Solarz and TNR had brought his Nazi past to public attention as early as 1980.

After Waldheim's tenure, the debased United Nations had nowhere to go but up. Under Javier Perez de Cuellar (1982-1992) the U.N. recovered some of its lost prestige while preserving its irrelevance to world politics. The U.N.'s relevance seemed to grow, however, with the end of the cold war. The new policy of cooperation between the United States and Gorbachev's Soviet Union, and then Yeltsin's Russia, ended the paralysis of the Security Council. The Third World bloc in the General Assembly—which had formed in order to exploit the U.S.-Soviet rivalry—began to crumble, its superfluousness apparent after the disappearance of the communist "Second World." Most important of all, the decision by President Bush to present the war against Iraq as a U.N. police action gave a new legitimacy to the United Nations. Talk of a "new world order" stoked the hopes of old Wilsonian globalists and their young epigones.

As fate would have it, just as the U.N. was gaining new credibility the office of Secretary-General passed to a veteran Egyptian diplomat, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, with an expansive vision of the U.N.'s future. Boutros-Ghali wanted to revitalize plans, dormant since the 1940s, for a military arm of the United Nations. He and others also suggested adding "peacemaking" to the organization's "peacekeeping" duties. Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the other Allies had envisioned collective war-making against "aggressor" nations—but by the great powers. Boutros-Ghali wanted the Secretary-General itself to be a great power.

As a rule, U.N. peacekeeping operations had been limited to places where there was already peace to be kept. The new peacemaking, however, involved the injection of U.N. forces into ongoing wars in Somalia and the Balkans. In Somalia, where the modest original mission of U.N. forces to deliver humanitarian aid was expanded into impossible nation-building, the U.N. forces sought to act as kingmakers, taking military action against uncooperative factions like that of General Mohammed Farah Aidid.

In the Balkans, U.N. peacemaking also led to disaster, but by a different route. The misnamed United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), instead of taking sides as U.N. forces had in Somalia, was confined to delivering supplies and defending "safe havens" for refugees. UNPROFOR soldiers were permitted to defend themselves from attack, but not to defend the civilian populations being shelled, driven from their homes, massacred and raped all around them. The representatives of "the global community" acted as passive voyeurs of atrocity, month after month, year after year. Soon the warring sides, particularly the Bosnian Serbs, learned that they need not fear the U.N.—and used the blue-helmeted observers as hostages against threatened NATO air strikes.

The fact that most of the approximately 40,000 U.N. troops in the Balkans belonged to France and Britain—states which are at once permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and major members of NATO—has provided a fascinating test of two international mechanisms for imposing order: collective security and alliance. As Security Council members, France and Britain have participated in an unwieldy and unworkable scheme whereby the five permanent members,

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working at cross purposes and sharing authority with the Secretary-General, supervise a "dual key" military operation in which NATO in turn shares authority with an international bureaucrat from Japan. As members of the much simpler and more efficient NATO alliance, France and Britain, after earlier misgivings, have participated in the recent bombing campaign that has succeeded in forcing Bosnian Serbs to withdraw heavy weapons from the vicinity of Sarajevo.

Whatever the outcome of the present NATO initiative, there is a general lesson in the debility of the U.N. and the relative efficacy of NATO in the Balkans. An alliance in which decisions can be swiftly made by a few military powers is far more effective than a collective-security organization burdened by too many participants and elaborate decision-making procedures—as FDR foresaw. NATO and the European Community, the two most effective international organizations of the past fifty years, are based on the principles of balance-of-power alliance and regional rather than universal organization—the very principles favored by Roosevelt and Churchill and rejected by Cordell Hull and his fellow globalists in designing the United Nations.

The virtues of the Rooseveltian approach to world order should not be exaggerated. FDR, like Churchill, was thinking only a few years ahead, not planning for half a century. Even if the U.N. had been shaped along Rooseveltian lines as a great-power concert, it would probably have been anachronistic in 1995, thanks to changes in the distribution of power and wealth in the world. The great powers of 1995 are not those of fifty years ago. If the Security Council were designed today, its membership would almost certainly include the United States, Japan, Germany, China and Russia—but not Britain or France, which have not been great powers for generations. It is absurd to have a great-power directorate that excludes half of the world's great powers.

Britain and France will not step down from the Security Council in favor of Japan and Germany. That means that any effort to bring the Security Council in line with contemporary power realities will require adding the second- and third-largest industrial democracies without expelling Britain or France (this is the Clinton administration's proposal). Most observers agree, however, that the General Assembly will never approve the accession of Japan and Germany unless permanent membership is also offered to developing countries like Brazil, India or Egypt.

The United States should oppose such reforms on the grounds that they dilute the authority of the great powers in general and of the U.S. in particular. Why should the U.S. acquiesce in the dilution of its influence in the Security Council by the excessive multiplication of members? A Security Council with seven or ten permanent members would be so unwieldy as to be useless.

Since the Security Council, flawed as it is, is the most workable branch of the U.N., a highly uncomfortable conclusion hovers precariously in the air. It is this: the U.N., bad as it is, can only be made worse by reforms like the radical enlargement of the Security Council. The U.N., then, should not be reformed. It should be abandoned.

The idea that the U.N. has outlived its usefulness is neither new nor limited to political extremists. In 1985, the U.N.'s own Joint Inspection Unit concluded a seventeen-year analysis of the organization with the prescription that the deteriorating world body be replaced by something new. The report suggests that "the time has come to begin to reflect in a serious and ambitious way on the definition of a third-generation World Organization."

Some analysts suggest a great-power concert of the sort that FDR initially envisioned. Even this might be too hopeful. While FDR's notion of the "four policemen" was more realistic than the Wilsonian dream of a world parliament, it was based on the assumption that cooperation among the wartime opponents of the Axis powers could be maintained indefinitely. In reality, of course, the wartime alliance began falling apart as soon as the defeat of Germany and Japan was certain—and the defeated Axis powers were rehabilitated and invited into the new anti-Soviet alliance. The Concert of Europe, established after the Napoleonic wars, suffered a similar fate, succumbing to internal conflicts after a few decades.

The brief life of great-power concerts is not surprising; in the absence of common enemies, great powers become rivals. Respect for agreed-upon spheres of influence can mitigate mutual suspicion but cannot eliminate it. FDR's projected great-power concert, then, was doomed to decay into two or more hostile blocs. The shrewd FDR may even have foreseen this; surely it was no accident that two of the other three great powers in his concert were clients of the U.S. (one of them, China, was not a genuine great power at all). Had FDR's four policemen fallen out among themselves, the most likely outcome would have been a U.S.-led alliance of Britain and China against the Soviet Union, similar to the American-led cold war alliance of Western Europe and a rehabilitated Japan.

A concert, it might be suggested, is a euphemism for an alliance that has outlived its purpose. Besides the difficulty of maintaining unity in the absence of a common threat, the varying rates of growth in wealth and power among countries present a challenge to the would-be framers of international concerts. In addition, even the most modest plans to institutionalize great-power concerts do not—indeed, cannot—take into account economic or political changes that cause a state to drop from the ranks of the great powers (like bankrupt Britain after 1945) or that change its regime, introducing entirely new dynamics in great-power politics (like the communist victory in China in 1949).

But, if you reject not only ambitious collective-security organizations but also institutionalized great-power concerts, you're left with the devices of traditional diplomacy that Wilsonians have vilified for almost a century:

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great-power alliances against particular countries and the traditional forum for international discussion known as the embassy. Would twentieth-century history have been much different if there had been neither a League of Nations nor a United Nations—if the tools of nineteenth-century statecraft had been the only tools of twentieth-century statecraft? While counter-factual historical speculation is of limited value, one can plausibly dismiss the post-1945 myth of Wilsonian propagandists that World War II might have been avoided if the U.S. had joined the League of Nations instead of staying out. World War II was caused by the imperialism of Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union (Nazi Germany's partner in the division of Poland and the Baltics). The only thing that might have deterred the aggression of these revisionist great powers was a show of force by the two democratic great powers, the United States and Britain, neither of which was willing to risk a major war to prevent what were then speculative threats. No one familiar with the history of the period can believe that mere U.S. membership in the toothless League of Nations would have convinced the isolationist American public to support sending American troops to defend Czechoslovakia, or Manchuria in the early 1930s, to say nothing of the 1920s. If isolationists were strong enough to defeat FDR's effort to lead the U.S. into the World Court in 1935, they would hardly have allowed him to send U.S. troops to the Rhineland in 1936.

As the League of Nations, with or without the U.S., could not have prevented World War II, so the U.N. did not, and could not, prevent the cold war. Even before the Axis powers surrendered, realists like George Kennan and Walter Lippmann were predicting the likely result of division among the wartime allies—the partition of Europe between the Soviets and an Anglo-American alliance, and East-West competition elsewhere in the world. The fact that the rival powers held seats on the Security Council had no discernible effect on the origin, conduct or conclusion of the cold war. Suppose the Soviets had been present to veto the U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing the "police action" in Korea. Would the Truman administration have meekly abandoned South Korea to conquest by Stalin's client Kim Il Sung? Of course not. The U.S. would almost certainly have come to South Korea's defense under some other legalistic pretext.

If the League and the U.N. had such little effect on the course of events in the last two worldwide conflicts, what reason is there to believe that either the U.N. or a successor organization would serve as anything more than an additional arena of conflict in a future great-power rivalry? The U.N. would not be able to prevent a cold war between China and the United States or Japan—and might well inflame tensions by permitting opportunistic states in the General Assembly to amplify the propaganda of one side or the other.

Defenders of the U.N. might concede the irrelevance of the organization when the stakes are high and the great powers are involved. But can't the U.N. play an important role in resolving disputes between lesser powers? In theory it might. In practice it seldom has. Former Israeli diplomat Abba Ebban, in a recent issue of *Foreign Affairs*, listed the negotiations to which the U.N. has been irrelevant: "The Austrian State Treaty, which prohibits Austria from possessing nuclear weapons; the termination of the Berlin blockades; the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Union; the end of Algeria's war for independence from France; the American opening to China; the conclusion of the Salt I arms limitation agreement; the Panama Canal settlement; the *Ostpolitik* agreements orchestrated by German Chancellor Willy Brandt, leading to the recognition of the European frontiers; the Rhodesia-Zimbabwe settlement; the establishment of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe at Helsinki; the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty; the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty; the Declaration of Principles signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization; the British-Irish dialogue; the Israeli-Vatican reconciliation; the new agreements between the republics of the former Soviet Union and the Western states...." The list could be extended. To be sure, the U.N. has sometimes usefully provided its good offices for conflict resolution. But countries like Switzerland and organizations like the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe can do that. And peacekeeping is best undertaken by countries from the regions involved, which, though probably less neutral, do at least have an ongoing stake in the peaceful settlement of a conflict.

The final argument for the U.N. is the one that realists find most compelling—namely, that since the cold war, and particularly during the Gulf war, the U.N. has proved a pliant instrument of American policy. Why not continue to use the blue flag to disguise the Stars and Stripes? This clever strategy, alas, founders on the built-in conflict between world opinion and the beliefs of the American public. A U.N. policy that is identified closely enough with American strategy to win lasting public support in the U.S. would be too closely identified with American strategy to win support outside of the United States. No administration can persuade elites abroad that the U.N. is not a mere tool of the U.S. while at the same time persuading Congress and the public that, well, it is. By pretending that the United States must get the permission of the Security Council before it can act, alone or with its allies, President Clinton, like President Bush, has lent the U.N. a prestige it does not deserve, without gaining a legitimacy the U.S. needs. In the future the U.S. should refrain from seeking "authorization" from this misbegotten and discredited organization.

After a half-century of doing little harm and less good, the U.N. should be allowed to wither away into irrelevance, as it was doing before President Bush unwisely, if temporarily, revived its importance. George Kennan was right when he declared that the U.N. should have been buried stillborn at the Dumbarton Oaks conference. If the United Nations did not exist, it would be necessary *not* to invent it. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Some Californians

In Hollywood there are companies that rent old automobiles to studios making period pictures, and one of these companies must have made a bundle on **Devil in a Blue Dress** (TriStar). The year is 1948, the place L.A., and the streets are thronged with the right vehicles. Other kinds of décor help, but in an auto-centered city, cars determine eras.

Walter Mosley, who wrote the novel, is by now the most celebrated of black crime authors. Carl Franklin, who adapted the book, is a black director. The leading role, Ezekiel "Easy" Rawlins, is played by Denzel Washington, who does it easily. Rawlins is a war vet, now out of work, who accepts a sort of private-eye job, even though it smells bad to him, because he needs the money. He is to track down a young white woman who has a well-known penchant for black lovers and who has disappeared into the black world. Rawlins's suspicions, and ours, are soon confirmed: he slides into a tangle of messy shenanigans, including murder, all tied to a mayoral race.

I admired Rawlins's detective abilities simply because he could follow the plot: I couldn't. Besides, though the film tries hard for Raymond Chandler nitty-grittiness, it's plagued by howling coincidences. For instance, Rawlins is on his back, pinned by a man who holds a knife to his face, when a friend arrives from Texas, gun in hand, just in split-second time to save the prone man's life.

But the narrative seems less important to the filmmakers than the milieu, the life of black people in L.A. in that year. In fact, after all the plot dust has settled, the film has a brief postlude in which Rawlins simply looks around his neighborhood, which is pleasantly domestic, and savors its peace. This postlude is, I assume, an implicit prelude to Watts, 1965.

But part of that prelude is the persistent theme in the picture of police harassment. Recurrently we see the L.A. police using the black community as a kind of hunting preserve. At the end, when Rawlins decides to become a private eye, it seems as much a defense against police hassling as a personal ambition. And, inevitably these days, this police attitude reminds us of an L.A. detective's recorded interviews that the jury was not allowed to hear in a recent L.A. trial.

Which leads to another point. That now-notorious detective used the detested "n"-word many times in those interviews, which commentators would refer to only as the "n"-word. Yet all through this film, black people use that word incessantly to each other and about each other when only black people are present. If present-day films are accurate, they still do it. I don't know of any other group, ethnic or religious, that uses a slur word about itself so constantly as a token of intimacy or humor or even ironic resentment of its use by others.

Sometimes I marvel at the sheer patience of filmmakers. Imagine setting out to film the script of **How to Make an American Quilt** (Universal). The dumbest of cinematic drudges, which the people involved here are not, would have seen that this script is tedious and trite. Yet every morning for many, many months, these people got up to do another day's work on it. Of course they all thought that the picture would make money; but, with surprising frequency, we get Hollywood films that the makers obviously thought would do something else, besides—of course and always—making money. Could anyone on this film have believed that?

In Jane Anderson's screenplay, from a novel by Whitney Otto, a group of aging women gather periodically at the home of two of them in northern California to make quilts. To this refuge flees Winona Ryder, graduate student, granddaughter and grandniece of two of the women, who leaves her lover for the summer to consider marriage and to finish her thesis in this quiet atmosphere. Trouble develops with Ryder's boyfriend, exacerbated by Ryder's dalliance with a local hunk. This is the least of it: the most of it is that, all through the film, Ryder is told the life story and love story of each of the quilting women, so relentlessly that after the first two stories, we groan at the thought that there are still five more to go.

All these reminiscences are supposed to enlighten Ryder in the handling of her own travails, but all of it is so mechanical, so familiar, that we expect Ryder to say, as each story begins, "Oh, never mind. I saw that movie." Also—I point this out in case the viewer is not bright enough to perceive it—an analogy is drawn between the making of the quilt and the making of the fabric of American life.

Jocelyn Moorhouse, the Australian who wrote and directed a heavy-handed

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Clockers. *Spike Lee gives pyrotechnical texture to a commonplace story of black drug-dealing and murder in Brooklyn. (Reviewed 10/2/95)* **A Month by the Lake.** *A trifling, old-fashioned romance, but it has (a) Vanessa Redgrave; (b) Edward Fox; (c) Lake Como. (10/23/95)* **Showgirls.** *For those (like me) who respond to good tinsel. Lots of nudity and fake sex and trashy plot, but the Las Vegas nightclub dancing is terrific. (10/23/95)* **To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything! Julie Newmar.** *Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes and John Leguizamo scintillate as three drag queens driving from N.Y. to L.A. Forget the script. (10/9/95)*—**SK**

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piece called *Proof*, has not lightened her touch in America. Some good actresses are involved: I won't mention them. I'll mention a bad one—Ryder, who is still the high-school prom queen, flirting on. And on.

By chance an old prejudice of mine got some nourishment recently. At the Museum of Modern Art in New York I saw an exhibition called "Alfred Stieglitz at Lake George," several dozen photographs of people and buildings and landscapes taken at his summer home. Lovely. They support John Szarkowski's statement that Stieglitz's work is "open to the poetic possibilities of facts."

But that evening I read that Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly* was on television. I watched: and on *television*—not even the full-scale, non-electronic images of the original—frame after frame of the black-and-white cinematography by Sven Nykvist, with Bergman as co-composer, seemed to me the aesthetic equal of many of the Stieglitz images I had seen that afternoon. Once again I felt some retrospective impatience with so-called salon photography—except for portraits, such as many of Stieglitz's and almost all of Nadar's, which fix real people for us against the inroads of mortality. The best cinematography seems to me to achieve much of what most still photography is praised for, and does it while en route somewhere, while accomplishing something else as well: the articulation of a drama.

Correction. Two weeks ago I said that Albert Finney played a rural English policeman in *The Playboys*. A slip. The whole point of the reference was that the policeman is Irish. •

In The End Was The Word

BY MICHAEL ANDRÉ BERNSTEIN

Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew by John Felstiner

(Yale University Press, 344 pp., $30)

Paul Celan-Nelly Sachs: Correspondence edited by Barbara Wiedemann translated by Christopher Clark

(Sheep Meadow Press, 112 pp., $19.95)

"I wanted most of all ... to tell you—with what words, with what silence?—that you must not believe words like yours can remain unheard." *Mit welchen Worten, welchem Schweigen?* The delicacy of Paul Celan's question to Nelly Sachs, his fellow poet and Shoah-haunted exile, and the tact with which he hesitates between stillness and speech, even as he offers her the solace of both, is characteristic of the tension at the heart of his own utterances as a poet. But here, in this letter of January 1958, by speaking more as a bringer of comfort than as another bruised survivor or a companion in inner devastation, Celan allows his phrase to embrace both impulses; his words reach as much towards muteness as towards articulation.

And yet, at the level of syntax, this interjection, like many of Celan's more celebrated formulations, attests to an irreparable inner fissure. "With what words, with what silence": the phrase sharply divides in half, with the second element almost, but never entirely, undoing the first. There is all the difference in the world between being silent and being silenced, but for a European Jew who managed to survive the genocidal onslaught of Nazism, the two categories, a freely chosen, responsive silence and the empty muteness of extermination, remain eerily linked in an intractable and purely destructive psychic bond. This Celan knew well.

The exploration of silence (and of its visual corollary, absence) as an aesthetic resource in its own right has been one of modernism's central projects, at least since Mallarmé's *Un Coup de Dés* tried to make the circumambient blankness of the page as much a part of the poem's rhythm as the pacing and the length of its actual words. Think of Cézanne's watercolors, where the whiteness of the

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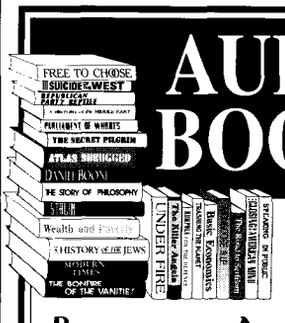

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untreated paper is crucial to defining the composition's different elements and demarcating their spatial proportions, or think of the emotion-laden intervals between the separate notes in Webern's chamber music, and it will be clear that in the first half of this century each of the arts was enriched by a repertory of techniques intended to marshal both the formal and the psychological power of silence. For a Jew writing in the aftermath of the Shoah, the choice of silence as a way to register forever inaudible articulations, the felt pressure of bodies and forms that no longer exist, has an entirely different force, all the more so if that Jewish writer is also a hyper-conscious inheritor of the whole modernist tradition, with all its ambition and self-interrogation.

I know of no other figure of whom such a description is more true than Paul Celan (1920-1970), the adopted name of Paul Antschel, whose collected works constitute the one indispensable body of verse written by a Western European since the death of Rilke in 1926. Yet if Celan's centrality among the greatest poets of the century has become axiomatic, at least for the German-speaking world, the radical solitude of his situation and his achievement has also kept him a figure apart. He is a writer exemplary of, but also eccentric to, a language whose integrity his work did so much to restore in the aftermath of its degradation in the Third Reich.

PAUL CELAN BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Even the most fragmentary details of Celan's personal existence, as these are slowly emerging from the shelter of his intensely guarded privacy, show the immense psychic cost of his burden as a Jewish artist who was compelled to compose his works in the same language as the murderers of his parents, his community, his world. For Celan, the mother-tongue stands in unbearable intimacy with the murderer-tongue, the cadences of his mother's favorite songs and fairy tales recapitulated in the rhetoric that conceived, organized and then implemented the Final Solution. The words of the lullabies on which he was raised could never be entirely dissociated from what he later called "the thousand darknesses of deathbringing speech." But the astonishing fact remains that no matter how lacerating the effort, Celan made out of that terrible contradiction his greatest poems.

Born a Romanian citizen, and then, in 1955, becoming a naturalized French one, Celan scarcely ever inhabited a country whose official language was German. Yet he never stopped writing German poems. He wrote them in the Czernowitz ghetto into which he and the other Jews of his town were herded in 1941, and he continued writing in German, often in rhythms and imagery derived from Rilke and Trakl, while enduring the brutish regime of the forced labor camps in which he was held from July 1942 until early 1944. And it was in a German poem that he first tried to frame a response to the news of his parents' death. As he explained in a much-quoted self-definition offered to a friend in 1948, "there is nothing in the world for which a poet will give up writing, not even when he is a Jew and the language of his poems is German."

But underneath the seeming assurance of this sentence lies all the compacted anxiety with which Celan loaded that crucial word "nothing." It was into "nothing in the world," after all, that the Germans sought to reduce Jewish existence; and in the haunting phrase from "Deathfugue," Celan's best-known poem, it was the nothingness of "a grave in the air" that awaited the Jews of the ghettos and the death camps; and it was into a nothingness, lacking even a sure location or a fixed date, that Celan's own mother and father vanished forever. (The best historical assumption, which cannot be confirmed, is that Leo Antschel, Celan's father, died from typhus in the fall of 1942, after being deported to the Michailowka camp in the Ukraine, and that a few months later the poet's mother, Friederike, was shot because she was no longer useful as a slave laborer.)

In "Psalm," which remains one of the very few poems in any language to confront directly the annihilation of European Jewry without seeming presumptuous, "nothing" becomes the root term of a series of undoings that amount to a radical subversion of the millennial tradition of religious songs of worship or lamentation:

> A Nothing
> we were, are now, and
> ever
> shall be, blooming:
> the Nothing-, the
> No One's-Rose.

Chosen flowers of an absent God ("Blessèd are thou, No One") who was unable to save His people from being turned into the airy vacancy of ashes and wind, Celan's voices have made out of the nothingness of their futile despair an indictment against a Creator who has lost the power to bring forth new life out of so much suffering:

> No one kneads us again out of earth and
> clay,
> no one incants our dust.
> No one.

In his book *Fadensonnen*, or *Threadsuns*, which appeared in 1968, Celan described his poetics as *die Spur eines Bisses im Nirgends*, "traces of bite-marks into Nothingness," and much of his writing can be seen as an intractable unravelling of the implications of Lear's "Nothing

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will come of nothing" for our age of industrialized mass-murder. So the "nothing in the world for which a poet will give up writing," which Celan invokes almost at the outset of his career, is not only his declaration of a literary calling, but a figure for all the piled-up absences that will compel both his most emotionally charged utterances and the silence of suicide that, at the age of 49, he ultimately chose.

We still know very little about Celan's last weeks, but the ever-increasing extremity of his desolation was unmistakable even before he took his own life in Paris around April 20, 1970. One of Celan's poems speaks of a "radiance that will not comfort," and his writing continually questions the value of its own moments of illumination because of their impotence in the face of so much loss. Yet there is no truth in the banal image of Celan as an unrecognized genius whose work was too challenging to be appreciated by his contemporaries. Quite the contrary. What is surprising is how early Celan found an attentive audience, how quickly his reputation as a major writer was secured.

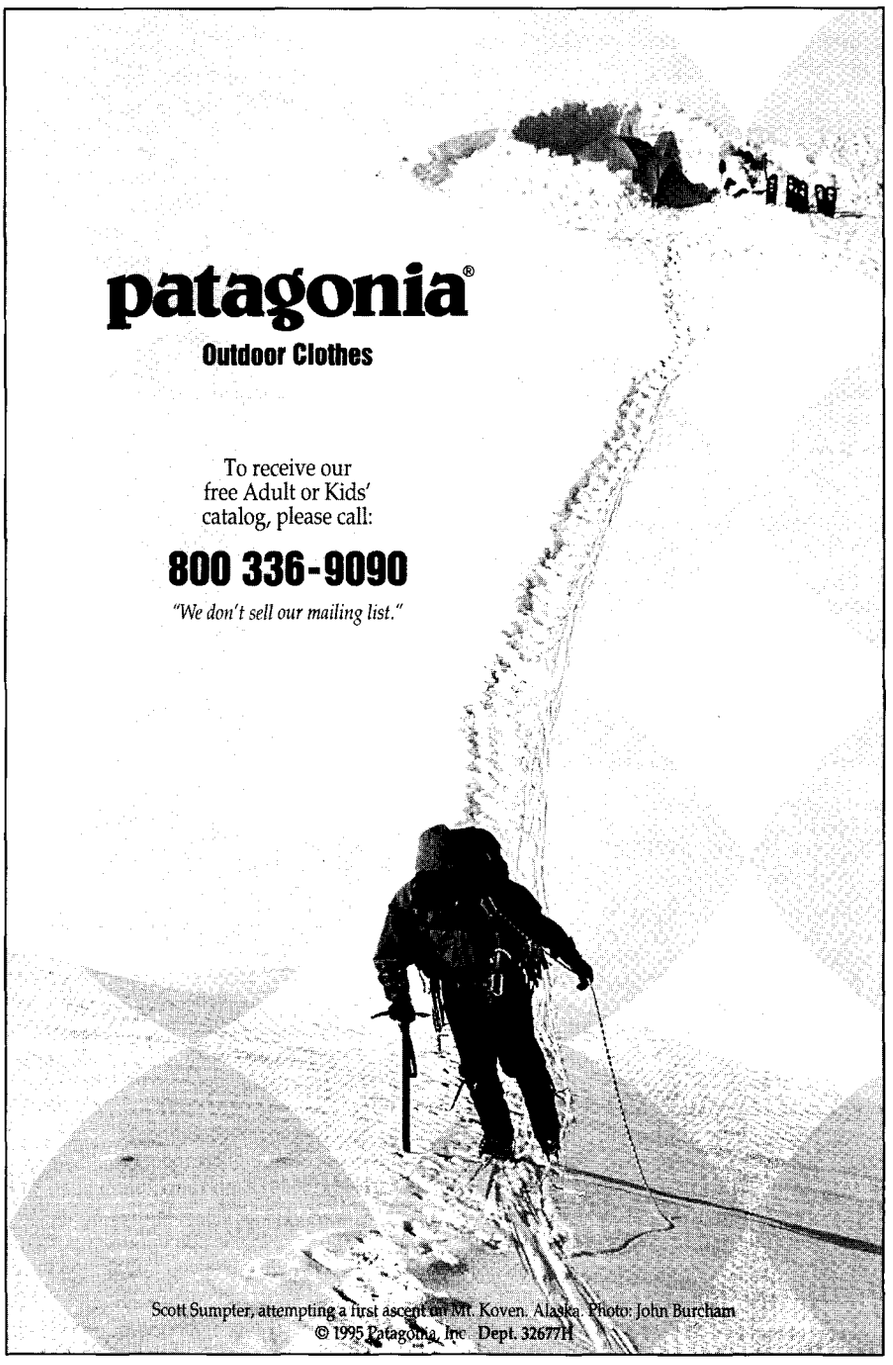
When he arrived in Vienna in December 1947, he brought with him a letter of introduction from Alfred Margul-Sperber, the noted Jewish Bukovina poet, who described Celan as "the most original and unmistakable of the recent German generation.... [Celan's poetry is] the only lyric counterpart to Kafka's work." Celan was soon invited to give readings in public and on Austrian radio; his work appeared in an important avant-garde magazine, and in 1948, after he had already left for Paris, his first book, *Der Sand aus den Urnen* (*The Sand from the Urns*), was published by a Viennese publisher. Although the misprints and the cheap paper and binding made Celan withdraw the volume, his letters confirm that he was already being treated as "the greatest poet in Austria and ... in Germany as well."

In 1952, when a Stuttgart publisher brought out *Mohn und Gedächtnis* (*Poppy and Remembrance*), a greatly expanded collection which retained the best poems from *The Sand from the Urns*, Celan immediately became one of the most widely discussed poets in the country. The book was reviewed in many of the leading German newspapers, and its central poem, "*Todesfuge*," or "Deathfugue," almost overnight became the country's single most commented-upon, reprinted and officially canonized poem about the Shoah. The poem's unprecedented reception helped fuel Celan's later suspicion that it was being misused to suggest a kind of aestheticized reconciliation between Germans and Jews.

But neither its familiarity nor the sometimes dubious reasons for its initial success should blind one to how astonishing a work "Deathfugue" really is. From the opening lines, the poem's force and originality are palpable:

Black milk of daybreak we drink it at evening
we drink it at midday and morning we drink it at night
we drink and we drink
we shovel a grave in the air there you won't lie too cramped
A man lives in the house he plays with his vipers he writes
he writes when it grows dark to Deutschland your golden hair
Margareta
he writes it and steps out of doors and the stars are all sparkling
he whistles his hounds to come close
he whistles his Jews into rows has them shovel a grave in the ground
he commands us play up for the dance

Perhaps the most astonishing feature of this poem, even more than its hypnotic rhythms and images, is the daring with which it voices the experience of the death factories in the first person plural and in the present tense. The "we" who speak the words of the poem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are Jewish prisoners in one of the extermination camps; and by permitting himself this act of imaginative ventriloquism, Celan directly violates one of the central taboos of our time. "Deathfugue" demonstrates that poetry *can* imagine the unimaginable, and create a language for what is unsayable, and give memorable shape to experiences that are not autobiographically grounded.

But so strong is our age's suspicion of the imagination, and so unshakable its faith that only biographical testimony can ring true, that numerous early critics were convinced that Celan himself must be a concentration camp survivor. Perhaps Celan shared some of this doubt about the propriety of speaking in the voice of a "we" whose fate he had not directly undergone. Certainly his later writing was much more cautious in the way it permitted itself such liberties, and some of his subsequent dissatisfaction with "Deathfugue" may have been owed not only to its facile appropriation by German educators and politicians, but also to its fluency in engaging a subject that ought to require more halting and hesitant tones.

Celan rapidly began to strip himself of the medievalism and the Rilkean echoes that still dominated too much of *Mohn und Gedächtnis*. Derivative and overly luxurious lines such as "Mould-green is the house of oblivion./At each of its blowing gates your beheaded minstrel goes blue," or "we love one another like poppy and memory,/we slumber like wine in the seashells,/like the sea in the moon's blood-beam," gave way to a more austere language. In 1955, Celan's next book, *Von Schwelle zu Schwelle* (*From Threshold to Threshold*), raised the issue of the poet's responsibility to his subject matter with unforgiving directness:

> Whichever stone you lift—
> you lay bare
> those who need the protection of
> stones. . . .
>
> Whichever word you speak—
> you owe
> to destruction.

If there was a single volume that signaled a decisive shift in Celan's writing, however, it was undoubtedly the collection called *Sprachgitter* (*Speech-Grille*), which appeared in 1959. The darkness of the Shoah is no longer only a thematic obsession, it seems also to have penetrated the poet's very language, compelling him towards a new kind of speech: an articulate reticence in which suffering is recognizable more by its speechlessness than by its capacity to cry out. So in "*Tenebrae*," when Celan again dares to assume the voice of those who went "wind-skewed" into the "pit and crater" of death (*windschief*, the German term, is one of the many brilliant and untranslatable neologisms that Celan invented in this book), he does so without the careful "stage-setting" of "Deathfugue." Although the imagery of the gas chambers is unmistakable, there is no more mention of a Nazi camp commander, only an argument directly with God:

> Near are we, Lord,
> near and graspable.
>
> Grasped already, Lord,
> clawed into each other, as if
> each of our bodies were
> your body, Lord.
>
> Pray, Lord,
> pray to us,
> we are near.
>
> Wind-skewed we went there,
> went there, to bend
> over pit and crater.

A German critic has observed that poems such as "*Tenebrae*" and "*Engführung*" ("Stretto"), the concluding poem of *Speech-grille*, are reworkings of "Deathfugue" with a different poetics. But what is at issue is far more than a change in style. It is a radical transformation of the whole relationship between speech and silence in the face of annihilation:

> Ashes.
> Ashes, Ashes.
> Night.
> Night-and-Night. —Find
> that eye, the moist one
>
> Taken off
> to the terrain
> with
> the unerring
> trace:
>
> Grass.
> Grass,
> written asunder.

In subsequent volumes, Celan's language became even more concentrated, his effects more dependent upon releasing the energy of a single word, or even a single syllable and the silence surrounding it, rather than on the long lines, the regular iambic and dactylic metres, and the rich rhymes of earlier poems. The intense pressure on each element of the poem—diction, syntax, rhythm—sometimes leads to a series of unprecedented (and largely untranslatable) word formations, such as "Stretto's" *auseinandergeschrieben* ("written asunder") for the paradox of the preservation and the dispersal of Jewish traces in the grass of the concentration camps and on the pages of the poem; and *Rauchseele* ("smoke-soul"), for those who were incinerated in the Nazi crematoria as well as for the transience and fragility of w hat makes us human in the first place; and *Meingedicht* ("my perjury-poem"), for Celan's bitter rejection of what he had come to think of as the gaudiness of his own earlier verse. And at other times the same pressure compels the terrible clarity of lines such as these:

> No one
> witnesses for the
> witness.

And yet neither Celan's discarding of the poetic techniques that had established his reputation nor the turbulence of his private life led to any diminution in his writing. Translations of poets such as Mandelstam, Blok, Yesenin, Valéry, Michaux, Shakespeare and Ungaretti appeared at regular intervals, and starting in 1959 he was employed as a teacher of German at the École Normale Supérieure. His letters often speak of feeling sterile and blocked, but collections such as *Die Niemandsrose* (*The No-One's Rose*) in 1963, *Atemwende* (*Breath-turn*) in 1967, *Fadensonnen* (*Threadsuns*) in 1968, and the posthumously published *Lichtzwang* (*Light-Compulsion*) in 1970, *Schneepart* (*Snowpart*) in 1971 and *Zeitgehöft* (*Homestead of Time*) in 1976, actually suggest a remarkable intensification in the pace at which Celan produced new poems.

Despite Celan's refusal to live in Germany, the appearance there of each of his books was regarded as an important cultural event, and between 1956 and 1964 he was awarded the country's four major literary prizes. He used one of these occasions, the award of the Georg Büchner Prize in Darmstadt in 1960, to produce "The Meridian," his most searching statement about the nature of modern poetry. Unusual for a poet in this century, Celan wrote very little criticism and produced remarkably few theoretical "defenses" of his poetics. In its difficulty and its rigor, however, Celan's prose is scarcely distinguishable from his verse; and when he insists in "The Meridian" that the poem must speak "on behalf of the other . . . perhaps of an altogether other," it is poetry's obligation to bear witness for the now speechless witnesses that we hear affirmed. As long as what Celan calls poetry's "desperate conversation" can be sustained, as long as its "strong tendency towards silence" and its responsibility towards those who were consigned to ashes, do not annul one another, lyric poetry is possible even after Auschwitz.

Since Celan's poems seem at once so oblique and yet so unmistakably rooted in personal anguish, and since his fate seems so singular and yet so emblematic, it is difficult not to be fascinated by

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his life and grateful for any elucidations that biography can offer. And I think this holds true even if we share some of Celan's own distaste for the chatter of literary biography that merely intrudes between the reader and the poem. Even relatively brief documents, such as Celan's correspondence with Nelly Sachs, or the untranslated correspondence with Franz Wurm, can be more useful than many of the labored theoretical exegeses that have tried to appropriate Celan for various transient academic projects.

John Felstiner's detailed and carefully researched literary biography is thus particularly welcome. It is no small accomplishment that the first reliable life of Celan should be the work of a noted American translator and a professor of English and Jewish studies. Whatever reservations one may have about Felstiner's book, it is important to acknowledge how useful a volume it is, and to register one's appreciation for Felstiner's effort of careful research and imaginative sympathy.

For Felstiner, translation is the most deeply engaged of all critical acts, and I have used his versions of Celan throughout this discussion. No previous translator has made so careful and uncoercive a case for a particular rendering, or integrated translation and commentary, so thoughtfully. Even when some of Felstiner's decisions seem eccentric (his part English, part German rendering of "*der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland sein Auge ist blau*" as "this Death is *ein Meister aus Deutschland* his eye it is blue"), he carefully explains what prompted his choice, so that a reader has sufficient information to imagine different possible solutions to Felstiner's.

It is a commonplace, though not an especially helpful one, that a poet of Celan's radical difficulty is strictly untranslatable. In fact, translation often acts as a powerful inducement to learn how to read in the original an author by whom one was first moved in one's own language. Enough of Celan's force comes through in the best English versions to make an initial encounter with him powerful even for readers who do not know German. For years, that first encounter was likely to be in one of Michael Hamburger's books, and his anthology *Poems of Paul Celan* (1988) remains the most representative and accomplished one-volume text available. But it is often helpful to compare several translations, less to evaluate them on their own terms than to see how differently Celan's lines can be understood. The most persuasive that I have come across are the work of Joachim Neugroschel, Katherine Washburn and Margaret Guillemin, and Pierre Joris. (The latter's translation of *Atemwende* has benefited from recent critical and textual studies of Celan's work.)

But nobody has so convincingly registered the Jewish dimension in Celan's language and thought as Felstiner. The importance to Celan's work of the Hebrew Bible and (by way of Gershom Scholem and Martin Buber) Kabbalistic and Hassidic lore has long been recognized, yet Felstiner provides by far the most extensive account we have of their crucial function in the texture of Celan's verses. His alertness to Celan's Jewish sources, buttressed by his access to the poet's voluminous and still largely unpublished notebooks, is invaluable.

It is not only Hebrew and Yiddish, however, that nourish the radical polyphony of Celan's language. Romanian, Russian and French are also imaginatively and lexically vital to Celan's verbal inventiveness, and both English and Italian, although less central, are tangible presences in many of his formulations. Indeed, what has become increasingly clear in the quarter of a century since Celan's death is how partial and restricting it is to think of him as, in any normative sense, a German poet at all.

I mean this quite straightforwardly. When Paul Antschel was born on November 23, 1920, in Czernowitz, the town

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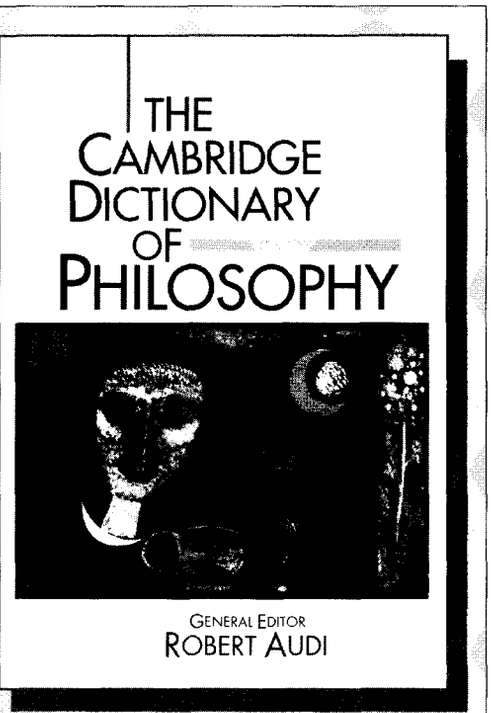

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had been part of Romania for only two years. Before 1918, Czernowitz, called "little Vienna" by its large and culturally flourishing Jewish population, was the capital of Bukovina, the easternmost crown land of the Hapsburg monarchy. Celan occasionally called himself a "posthumously born *Kakanier*," and his use of Robert Musil's affectionately ironic term for the Austro-Hungarian empire makes clear how appealing he found the ideal of a multiethnic polity in which German language and culture was one, but by no means the sole, strand. In spite of the long history of Austrian anti-Semitism, S.Y. Agnon spoke for many Eastern European Jews when he described one of his characters as a native of Hapsburg Austria, "where one is less conscious of the Exile." The pluralism of Franz Joseph's polyglot empire was more congenial to Celan's sensibility than were any of the ethnically defined, nationalistic states that replaced it.

In post-Hapsburg Czernowitz, however, where the official language of government and education throughout Celan's childhood was Romanian, German was a choice, not an inheritance. In effect, Czernowitz's Jews had no "natural language," and to master high German, as Celan's mother made sure that he did, was a deliberate and entirely self-conscious accomplishment. Neither his father's emphasis on a Zionist and Hebraic education, which Celan rejected as soon as he was able, nor the Romanian of the majority of his countrymen ever penetrated as deeply as did the "mother-word" of Friederike Antschel's German. The elective affinity binding mother and son to German meant that Celan's imagination found its truest expression in a language that was rich in cultural opportunities, but also highly mediated and somewhat estranged from daily speech. The startling movement among different image registers and literary traditions present even in Celan's very early poetry—the dazzling way in which he simultaneously draws upon Middle High German, biblical Hebrew, Romanian folk songs and French surrealism—is perhaps more explicable if we keep in mind his self-description as a belated inheritor of the Hapsburg linguistic and cultural heterogeneity.

Because German was the tongue chosen for him by his mother, not a given of his environment, Celan's relationship to it, even before its defilement during the Nazi years, was more self-conscious and more charged than that of a native German, for whom defining himself within the language was never open to question. After the Shoah, however, Celan's affiliation with German meant that what he most longed to preserve (the memory of his childhood world, and especially of his mother) was the very thing that he needed to shed in order to survive emotionally. Simply put, Celan could not distance himself from the injuries inflicted in and through German without at the same time losing himself, without abandoning who he had become at the behest of the very person whom he most longed to safeguard from oblivion. Injury and reparation had to, but could not, take place in the same tongue. In this entirely personal but also widely shared crisis, in this fusion of psychic and linguistic self-fracturing, Celan's verse incarnates the moral and aesthetic dilemma facing post-war European, not merely Jewish, writing.

If authors such as the Austrian concentration camp survivor Jean Améry (born Hans Meyer) feared that "no bridge led from death in Auschwitz to *Death in Venice*," Celan's questioning reaches deeper precisely because it is haunted not by the chasm but rather by the continuity, and even the complicity, between the Nazi atrocities and the highest forms of Western literary and intellectual expression. "Death is a master from Germany," Celan pronounces in one of his most disturbing lines, a master whose works encompass not merely the ovens of Auschwitz, but also, as Felstiner reminds us, the perfection of *The Art of the Fugue* (caught up in the poem's very title, "Deathfugue") and *The Apprenticeship of Wilhelm Meister*, Goethe's great novel of the civilizing power of education and experience. Tormented by the kinship between such consummate mastery and such lethal mastery, Celan never ceased asking himself and his language a sharper, more urgent version of the question that Eliot posed in "Gerontion": "After such knowledge, what forgiveness?"

Felstiner shrewdly organizes his book as a biography told through the close scrutiny of particular poems, and wherever possible it is by means of their articulation in a specific text that Celan's experiences are recounted. A brief chronology, of the sort provided by Barbara Wiedemann at the back of the Celan-Sachs *Correspondence*, might have been helpful, but still it is relatively easy to follow the principal stages of Celan's life. Felstiner rightly pays careful attention to the diversity of influences on Antschel before he became "Celan." In addition to the already richly variegated atmosphere of pre-war Czernowitz, and the subsequent horrors of the Nazi years, there is also the stimulus of Celan's medical studies in Tours in 1938-39.

Here, as so often in this most private and indirect of writers, details of Celan's personal history coincide eerily with the shrillest public events. Thus it was exactly on *Kristallnacht*, on November 9, 1938, that Celan's train to France passed through Berlin, and he later recalls that moment through one of the most powerfully earned images of historical foreshadowing in modern verse:

> Via Cracow
> you came, at the Anhalter
> Station
> you caught sight of smoke
> that was already from tomorrow.

But even if, as in this case, we know the principal situations and their dates, and can establish their relation to specific images in his verse, Celan's personality and temperament remain essentially elusive.

Accounts of what prompted him, while he was living in Bucharest between 1945 and 1947, to adopt the name "Celan" are little more than suppositions, and we lack all but the most elementary information about his decision in 1955 to marry Gisèle de Lestrange, a graphic artist from an old French Catholic family, whose mother entered a Breton convent as soon as her husband died. In contrast to Robert Lowell, the episodes of depression and rage that led Celan in the late 1960s not merely to live apart from Gisèle and their son Eric, but also to seek out radical treatments like electroshock therapy, have not given rise to an extensive repertoire of voyeuristic anecdotes. In fact, from the story of his parents' arrest and deportation from Czernowitz in 1942, to his death in 1970 by drowning in the Seine, multiple and contradictory accounts have circulated about virtually every major event in Celan's life.

It is both astonishing and salutary, especially after reading Felstiner's lengthy biography, to realize again how little we can actually say with any confidence about him. Much of our ignorance is no doubt owed to the way Celan's surviving friends continue to respect the poet's own reticence; and in an age when gossip has become our culture's way of talking to and about itself, there is something altogether admirable in honoring such discretion. Still, in a biography, even in one whose focus is quite properly on the poetry through which Celan lived, there is something curious in so hesitant and protective a stance. Paradoxically, the combination of extensive information on some parts of Celan's private life (the often crippling intensity of his fears about resurgent anti-Semitism, for example, or the depth to which he was shaken by Claire Goll's absurd accusations that he had plagiarized from the work of her late husband Yvain) only draw attention to Felstiner's

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guardedness about other aspects.

Since our comprehension of many of Celan's later texts often increases enormously the more we know about the circumstances of their composition, it is frustrating not to have that elucidation finally made available. How much, for example, does an image like *Magnetische Bläue im Mund,/erkeuchst du Pol um Pol* ("Magnetic blue in your mouth/you gasp up pole after pole") owe to the specifics of the shock treatment that Celan underwent in February, 1967? And were there any specific, new acts of perfidy, real or imagined, that prompted terrible outcries such as this one:

Ich schreite deinen Verrat aus,
Fußspangen an
allen Seins-
gelenken

("I stride out [through] your betrayal/foot-shackles on/every limb/of being")?

But it is not just the absence of clarifying biographical details that one regrets. Felstiner's tone is so protectively sympathetic of Celan that he unwittingly helps to further the impression of the writer as almost preternaturally fragile. Yet here, if anywhere, the distinction between the man and the poet is decisive. Of Celan's personal vulnerability there is, alas, all too clear a record, though his survival in the Romanian slave labor brigades, and his determination to risk an illegal and potentially dangerous escape from Bucharest to Vienna, show a resilience and power of will. As a writer, however, there was nothing at all fragile about him. Indeed, what is most evident in his mature work, both in his own texts and in his matchless translations into German of Russian, French, English and Italian writers, is Celan's certainty of his powers.

Celan knew that he was a strong enough poet to better both the famous nineteenth-century translations of Shakespeare's sonnets and the influential modern version by Stefan George. He knew himself sufficiently strong to compose poems as deliberate *Widerrufe* (literally, "recantations" or "disavowals") invocations that are also challenges to and revocations of cherished texts by Hölderlin and Rilke, the two German poets he most admired. (We have no formal term in American poetry like the German *Widerrufe*, but Wallace Stevens's reworking, in a bleaker and more astringent mode, of Keats, is analogous to Celan's long agon with Rilke.)

Most important, Celan was certain enough of his gifts that, when the need arose, he could discard all the techniques of densely compacted word-formation, the neologisms and the dizzying para-

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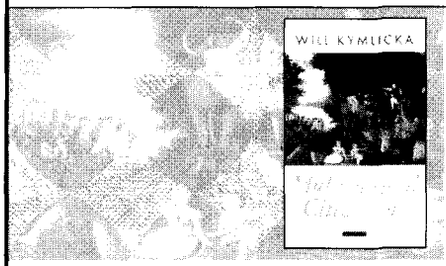

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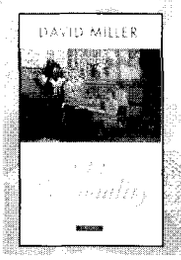

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doxes he had made uniquely his own. Towards the end of his life, as a result of his one trip to Israel in 1969, Celan composed some of the most astonishingly direct, sexually charged poems in the language. For a poet who took such brilliant advantage of German's capacity for lexical and syntactic metamorphoses, the way in which several discrete German nouns can be combined to constitute a never-before-seen compound, there is something breathtaking in the explicitness of a late lyric such as this:

There stood
a splinter of fig on your lip,

there stood
Jerusalem around us,

there stood
the bright pine scent
above the Danish skiff we thanked,

I stood
in you.

In the original, the words for "I stood" can also mean "I was erect." But the most audacious moment of his whole Jerusalem cycle comes when he unites the voice of a lover, a worshiper and a child gently laid to rest into a single benediction:

say, that Jerusalem *is*,

say it, as if I were this
your whiteness,
as if you were
mine,

as if without us we could be we,

I leaf you open, for ever,

you pray, you lay
us free.

When, in an explicit allusion to the *Song of Songs*, and perhaps also to Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, the image of the beloved's body, reverently opened like a holy book, modulates into a pun of such explosive force, a single consonant bridging the sacred and the sexual (*du betest, du bettest*; "you pray, you lay"), we are hearing a poet utterly confident in his artistry.

Indeed, throughout his work, Celan is often shockingly vivid in his use of sexual imagery, sometimes in the most unlikely contexts, just as he is also often manically comic in verbal transmutations that clearly owe as much to surrealism as to his Kabbalistic fascination with the energy latent in each distinct letter. Although he scrupulously registers several such occasions, Felstiner never seems fully comfortable with them, and moves the terrain, as quickly as possible, back to Celan's anguish as the exemplary Jewish survivor-poet. And a similar dichotomy, a reluctance to see anything except numinous suffering in Celan's work, continues to mark many of the finest responses to Celan, here and in Europe. It is still enormously difficult for us to see him as both the pre-eminent poet of the Shoah and as a writer whose power of verbal inventiveness necessarily also had its moments of a primarily textual self-affirmation. Criticism operates with antinomies that the imagination has little interest in obeying.

As a poet, Celan was fastidious out of strength, not out of fragility. Some of his power to both shock and move us is due to the ruthlessness with which he refused to accommodate expectations. Paramount among those expectations, I think, is our longing for the artist as seer, as bearer of a transcendent word through which the savagery, the shabbiness, and the banality of the age will somehow find redemption. This is a curiously Christian and Romantic typology to wish upon a poet whose writing is justly celebrated for the inwardness and the tension of its engagement with Jewish themes; and it actually points to a host of ill-conceived assumptions in the rhetoric of apocalypse and transcendence that has become a staple of recent Celan criticism.

It is probably unwise to insist upon the sacerdotal function of even the greatest writers, and there is little evidence that doing so with Paul Celan has done much to deepen the quality of responses to his poems. (Interpreting a seer is also a distinctly more glamorous activity than commenting upon a maker of poems, and no doubt this self-flattering aspect is not without influence on certain critics.) Put as starkly as possible, what we need is a secular reading of Celan, not a sacred one, a reading that engages the enormous difficulty of his works without the pathos or evasion of a critical rhetoric permanently pitched *in extremis*.

Ganz und gar nicht hermetisch, "absolutely not hermetic": this is what Celan insisted about his poetry, and he reacted with anger to any commentary that emphasized how inaccessible much of his writing had become, especially the poems beginning with "*Atemwende*" ("Breath-turn"), which appeared in 1967. But Celan's later style *is* hermetic, almost in the technical sense of summoning arcane knowledge and powers through word-magic. There are clearly poems whose meaning is recoverable only through intimate familiarity with Celan's private reading matter and the most circumstantial details of his daily routine. Moments of incomprehension are not always signs of a resistance to Celan's originality, nor need they bespeak a refusal to admit the gravity of his themes.

It is worth recalling that no less scrupulous a reader than Primo Levi confessed himself deeply frustrated by Celan's "obscurity." Some of these obscurities will undoubtedly be clarified when we have a reliable critical edition of Celan's writings, but I am not convinced that even a detailed, line-by-line commentary will ever resolve a sense of foreignness, of a steadily growing inner distance at the core of Celan's later speech. (It is precisely because many of Felstiner's interpretations are so helpful in this regard that his decision only occasionally to include the original German of the poems is needlessly limiting.)

"Language doesn't only build bridges into the world, but also into loneliness." This is how Celan, in 1952, described what his time trying to survive as a poet and a human being in the labor camps had taught him. In a sense, one of the things that his writing did, from the mid-1960s, was to give that loneliness an ever more precise language and dwelling place. By comparison to his mature writing, an early masterpiece such as "Deathfugue" is still too much the "virtuoso poem," too unself-questioning in its rhetoric and its metrics for the astringency Celan increasingly began to demand as evidence of both poetic and personal probity.

Celan began to think of his poems as inhabiting a place "north of the future," where it was still possible to sing songs "beyond humankind." But to write such songs meant to transform not only the kinds of words, but also the kind of silence, that filled his earlier poetry. To Sachs, Celan once confessed that his poems require not just a reader, but an intimate, an "addressable thou." The one thing you cannot do in utter solitude is have a meaningful silence. Without the hope of dialogue, without, that is, the felt presence of other voices on *this* side of humankind, the nature of silence itself is dreadfully changed.

Before, it was not just the emotional proximity of the dead that infused Celan's poems with silence, as though giving them space in which to still exist. The silence was eloquent also with the hope of bringing those extinguished voices into contact with new, living ones. In his later poems, when even the dream of a genuinely responsive readership fades, it is as though silence were becoming gradually speechless, as though it were no longer one of Celan's distinctive ways of saying, but a sign of the impossibility of saying anything that still mattered in

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human accents. And yet, for all their opacity, these final texts contain some of Celan's most darkly radiant moments. "Count up what was bitter and kept you awake" is what he instructed himself to do in an early poem. The results of that painful "counting up" will keep readers awake for generations to come.

MICHAEL ANDRÉ BERNSTEIN is the author of *Foregone Conclusions: Against Apocalyptic History* (University of California Press).

Go Down, Moses

BY DAVID THOMSON

In the Arena: An Autobiography by Charlton Heston

(Simon & Schuster, 592 pp., $27.50)

Charles, or Charlie, Carter was born in Evanston, Illinois, in 1923. To the family camera, he was a handsome boy, tall and blond and good at sports. Inside he felt lonely, and shy, and without social graces. He was horrified at the divorce of his parents and wounded by the ten years or so in which he never saw his father. He was awkward to the point of grimness with young women, and he leads us to suppose that he has never had knowledge of any woman except Lydia, whom he married when he was 21.

Carter's curious autobiography lets us feel the cramped kid and the gruff man he became, as well as the unironic grandeur that grew up—in robes, armor and history's key light—to be nothing less than "Charlton Heston," a name forever echoed by the salute of trumpets. The two tons in "Charlton Heston" are the granite lode of legend—boulders that propmen pick up, uncannily, two at a time. This Heston is a one-man digest of civilization, from Moses and Ben-Hur to El Cid and Michelangelo, all the way to the last captain left on a planet of apes, or the dry seer of conservative causes on what are called talk shows until he stills chaos and babble with the tablet-bearing baritone of "Now, gentlemen.... "

There he is on the book jacket, at 70, like the head on an old coin. A hunting gun is broken across his shoulder. A bush hat shades narrowed eyes. The famously fractured nose is hawkish, the mouth is just a closed fissure. You don't envy the deer he may be tracking. This is a serious man, one raised on prophets and presidents, from an age when audiences rarely doubted those guys.

He is not quite an actor for all seasons. Charlton Heston concedes that he hasn't been cast much in comedy; nor are love scenes his meat. But his gravity consists in more than the absence of humor or romantic fantasy. Heston believes in example, in prowess, in dignity, in being a hero, in living up on his ridge above Los Angeles with his guns. He believes in himself and in the people. And so he has a great need to make acting seem like a respectable, earnest, patriotic profession.

Heston has the direct manner of someone who reckons that too many matters are too often complicated by subtlety and introspection. Acting, he says, is largely a question of health, and energy, and getting good parts. He admits to being blessed in the first two departments. Robust and athletic, he has a Cal Ripken-ish sense of doing one's duty: "In sixty-some films I've never missed any part of a shooting day. This has given me the lowest insurance rate in the film industry, a more valuable asset than you might imagine." Almost certainly, Heston's persistence is like Ripken's: the sense of obligation, the wish to be deemed reliable are more important than mere physical endurance.

Such guys find secret honor in playing hurt, and they are made stronger in their pain by the dire example of the Strawberrys and the Brandos, who miss seasons and years. Such fortitude is admirable, and once upon a time it was exemplary. Still, the self-righteous iron men should not forget that something close to genius can lurk in spoiled, foolish and unreliable human shells. An actor may disapprove of Brando's withdrawal from the job, but that's no reason to discount Brando's misery that acting in American films is too often humiliating, fraudulent and bereft of dignity. Being an actor is not as comfortable as being a Reaganesque president. There are places in drama where the depth of a part meets the jitteriness in an actor's soul and provides a more desperate ordeal than driving a chariot and four horses.

Sooner or later, actors have to decide what the good parts are, or find a way of justifying the unhappy decisions that they are compelled to take. Heston has always been pledged to the classics—he is, in this and other ways, something of an Anglophile. Indeed, he has become a world and an industry unto himself, like one of those larger-than-life English actor-managers who played all the great roles in bemused provincial theaters; or like God creating Duluth and Bakersfield well after the hype of the big seven-day extravaganza was over.

In the last twenty years, often at the Ahmanson Theater in Los Angeles, Heston has steadily wrestled with what he would likely call "some of the big ones": *The Crucible, Macbeth, Long Day's Journey Into Night, A Man for All Seasons.* He has played Sherlock Holmes in *The Crucifier of Blood*, and the obsessed cop in Sidney Kingsley's *Detective Story* (a role that Heston lost to Kirk Douglas in the 1951 movie). He has also been Captain Queeg in a London revival of *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial.*

I saw none of those productions, but I have seen the work that Heston has been doing more recently on television, principally for Ted Turner and TNT: Sir Thomas More again, Long John Silver and another shot at Sherlock Holmes. Live theater in L.A. and TNT movie specials are not fashionable arenas or adroit career choices. There are celebrated Hollywood stars today who would disdain them, actors who will never approach Heston's authority in the twenty years or so after *The Ten Commandments.* Our more fragile stars would dread the challenge of such roles and such work, and blame their caution on the modest salaries offered. Still, for an evidently proud man—and one in whom professional pride ranks as a virtue—Heston is a humble, unashamed workhorse. He zestfully collects the big roles the way a traveler might hope to get to Samarkand and the Galapagos Islands before arthritis closes in.

This is oddly akin to the way he began. For well before his Hollywood movies, Heston played Peer Gynt and Marc Antony in 16mm movies that were made and funded by David Bradley, a wealthy eccentric who found Heston at Northwestern University. Those films had no commercial life, but the second one, a full version of *Julius Caesar*, was a calling card for the actor as he began his real career.

The point to be made about all these ventures, early and late, is that Heston

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has never been especially profound or imaginative as an actor. He is doggedly middlebrow, so conscientious that his manner sometimes clashes with the alleged flaws of his characters. But still he has presence, an implacable decency which I would compare (though it is not quite as interesting) to Lillian Gish's purity and self-belief. In Heston's heyday, the French critic Michel Mourlet wrote that he was "an axiom" on screen:

> By himself alone he constitutes a tragedy, and his presence in any film whatsoever suffices to create beauty. The contained violence expressed by the sombre phosphorescence of his eyes, his eagle's profile, the haughty arch of his eyebrows, his prominent cheekbones, the bitter and hard curve of his mouth, the fabulous power of his torso: this is what he possesses and what not even the worst director can degrade.

Those French critics! Heston does not himself quote this rapture. You can see him blushing and wincing at it, just as you can understand director William Wyler's horror on *Ben-Hur* lest Chuck discover that sometime screenwriter Gore Vidal was planning to give a homosexualist echo to the curious love-hate between Ben-Hur and Messala. Heston's vanity is not small, but it is not personal or narcissistic. He understands, rather, the nobility of "Charlton Heston," the office he occupies as some other men go in and out of the presidency.

He feels no strain now in feeling his physical link to history:

> While I have no early memories of Chicago, my mother's heart is rooted in that city. She was born there, of Scots/English stock who came to America through Canada. The Scots line is Clan Fraser of Inverness. The title and the lands were gifts of William the Conqueror as part of the spoils of his conquest of England in 1066 to one of his Norman captains, making him a baron in the bargain. The Normans were of course Norsemen, like the Vikings who had been raiding and raping along the Scottish coast for some centuries, thus accounting for the preponderance of tall, blond, blue-eyed males in our family—a blood strain I'm very proud of.

Is that what Cecil B. DeMille noticed in the early '50s? Heston was in pictures by then: he had the lead, a mean-spirited cynic, in a routine film noir called *Dark City*. In those days, he also had a rather loutish sexuality that served well in King Vidor's *Ruby Gentry* (1952) where he had what were called "raw" scenes with Jennifer Jones. But he was less interesting than such contemporaries as Kirk Douglas, Burt Lancaster and William Holden. Then, one day on the Paramount lot, Heston happened to be driving past the DeMille Building as C.B. himself stood on the steps outside. Heston gave a cheery, passing salute and DeMille liked the way the guy waved. So he cast him as the boss in his upcoming circus picture, *The Greatest Show on Earth*. It was a smash hit and won the Oscar for Best Picture. Heston was the rugged, rather bad-tempered driving force in the film's story, overshadowed by James Stewart's clown and Gloria Grahame's elephant girl, and by the boyish self-sufficiency of "the show" and DeMille's already archaic showmanship.

For a few years afterward, not much happened. Heston was working, but the pictures have faded with time: *The Savage*, in which he played a man raised by Sioux; *The President's Lady*, where he was Andrew Jackson; *Pony Express* (he was Buffalo Bill); *Arrowhead*; *The Naked Jungle*; *Secret of the Incas*; *The Far Horizons*, in which he was Clark of Lewis and Clark; and a few others. He was a solid workman; his insurance rate was low. But he was stiff, lofty, inclined to speak rather slowly (as if from the top of a mountain) while settling into emphatic states of mind. He was *dull*.

But dullness had its day. Physique, measured speech and self-importance were all vindicated by the not entirely Norse role of Moses in DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*. Thus—a little biblical throat-clearing is nearly obligatory—Heston, DeMille and their crew found themselves on the slopes of Mount Sinai in 1955, a year before that ground would be fought over for real. They walked to the summit to film the scene in which Moses is transfigured by the Word of the Lord. Heston was "into" the part: he was always a determined researcher and someone much affected by the mood of authentic settings. He suggested to DeMille that Moses should be barefoot. The director eyed him quizzically for a long beat and then said, "We'll do it that way." They shot that day and camped out that night on the mountain. Heston was up at 4 a.m. so that Frank McCoy ("a damn good man": Heston loves the unknown craftsmen, the stunt players and the horses) could do his makeup. And all the while his Moses was getting the message.

That night, Heston, C.B. and the abbot of the monastery on Sinai had dinner together. The actor made his plea:

> "Mr. DeMille," I said. "When we were filming that today, I was trying to imagine God's voice." (We were to record that back in the studio.) "Surely I hear Him inside my own head, my own heart. I think it should be in my own voice, too." The abbot sipped his wine and nodded thoughtfully. DeMille smiled. "We'll have to think about that. You already have a pretty good part, you know. It's possible, though. It might work." Some months later, that's the way we did it. I never really heard God on that mountain. But I do believe I found Moses there.

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The film that resulted is shameless and ramshackle, the sort of religiose spectacle that freed millions for the merciful calm of agnosticism. Heston made it work for himself not just by identifying with the prophet, but in placing him as a premature leader of the American Revolution. DeMille guessed he had another hit, the biggest since *Gone With the Wind*. God knows what God thought. Heston looks and sounds majestic amid the claptrap. He wore robes and beard as if they were idealism in flower.

To see the picture today is to marvel at its only being forty years old. Nearly the same can be said of the more respectable *Ben-Hur*, made in 1959, which won eleven Oscars, including one for Heston (again playing a blue-eyed Jew). That still stands as a record—and as a weird marker to the end of the studio era. Films of the '50s have dated far more than those from the '30s or '40s, maybe because they were so anxious to keep up-to-date.

Michel Mourlet was too generous to Heston, who was dependent on material and directors. Their shortcomings could dim even the glare of his phosphorescent excess. But nobody could match him in costume adventure, and the bold line stretched from Moses and Ben-Hur by way of another Andrew Jackson in *The Buccaneer* and *El Cid* to John the Baptist in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (Heston often met God, but he was always judged too manly for the role) and Michelangelo (completely straight, of course) in *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, and on to *Planet of the Apes* and *Earthquake* (his last solid hit, in 1974).

But the record is richer than the list of hits. In the same period, it was Heston who enabled the remarkable *Touch of Evil* to be made, simply because he had the clout to remind a studio that Orson Welles was a pretty good director. Nor is Heston less than impressive in the strange role of a Mexican cop in that picture. But there are a few other movies in which he let cracks show in the heroic façade: the inarticulate leader in Nicholas Ray's *55 Days at Peking*, the agonized cavalry officer in *Major Dundee*, a real Norman baron in *The War Lord* and a fascinating shot at the honorably self-destructive General Gordon (opposite Olivier's Mahdi) in *Khartoum*.

Heston is well worth reading on that series of "failures," even if the writing here is not as sharp as in his earlier *Journals*. He has a real understanding of Welles; he helps us feel the "born loser" in Ray; and he seems a fit antagonist for the aggressive Sam Peckinpah. That said, he does not esteem his failures, and he may not grasp the promise he showed briefly as a neurotic hero, or a rock beginning to crack. He loves the large parts, but he does not say much about their depths.

As his book and his life wear on, any chance of doubt or examination slips away. Heston began his political life as a Roosevelt supporter. He is proud of his early stand on civil rights. He reckoned Martin Luther King was "put on earth, I do believe, to be a twentieth-century Moses for his people. Over coffee and toast in his hotel, he was very quiet. Passionately quiet." He has been a steadfast hirer of Vanessa Redgrave, an opponent of political correctness, someone who loathed the American Film Institute's reluctance to give Elia Kazan an award for lifetime achievement because of his testimony to the House Un-American Activities Committee. But Heston changed direction in the '60s, at the very moment when his screen heroes went out of fashion. He supported Reagan loyally, if only because he'd seen Reagan handle the Screen Actors Guild. (Both men were long-time presidents of that body.) He is for the right to have guns and against affirmative action. He can easily sound like a naïve dogmatist who sees a country going to the dogs. On hearing of Democratic opposition to cuts in school lunches, he growls, "Hey, just a damn minute.... What ever happened to peanut-butter sandwiches and an apple?" And yet he is a determined loner. He never formed his own company and he never yielded to suggestions that he run for political office. And when, as a small shareholder, he goes to a Time-Warner meeting to deplore that company's exploitation of violence in rap lyrics, he is as appealing as a guy in a Capra film.

One can smile at the crustiness, at the overly jocular asides. There is too much ordering the reader around, and a hokey urge to treat Shakespeare as the ultimate sparring partner. "You can't begin on those Shakespeare monsters too early." Heston may have done too many movies now to escape sounding like a parody of himself. Still, this epic hero has come down from the mountain of his great fame without going crazy or losing his love of work. His feeling for family is genuine, something to be envied. One never doubts the place of honor in Heston's life, or his lifelong effort to live up to it.

Toward the end of the book, he goes off on a rant, itemizing his principal beliefs. He takes Hollywood to task for the plethora of films that cast doubt on our heroes and institutions. He has special scorn for Oliver Stone and Quentin Tarantino. Then he reins himself in and delivers a testament:

> The moving image has incalculable power to persuade. Over the last generation, hundreds of films have given us an image of government, at every level of our society, as villainous. Is it any wonder a lot of people accept this as reality? If the government is corrupt, take to the hills and hunker down! I roamed the Michigan woods with a gun when I was a kid, but I was looking for rabbits for supper, not federal buildings to blow up. Back then, though, we were the good guys. I grew up before they started making all those films.

Of course, the movies have also given us images of guns and their justice, the ridge and its romance, the resolute face and its victory. Their energy helped America through the hard times of depression and war. But they set up expectations that could only be disappointed. Inadvertently, perhaps, Heston has stumbled on the disastrous way in which movies have undermined our sense of reality and responsibility.

The Heston epic was poised on the brink of great disillusion, and if he has missed it personally he must not be surprised if we are reeling. *Ben-Hur* and *El Cid* were the swansong for a popular entertainment in which there was a natural equation of combat with the virtue of the winner. When Ben-Hur wins the chariot race, when the magical corpse of El Cid leads his last charge, we can see a chivalric code working without mockery or compromise; but as those films were being made, so many classic heroes were dying: Gable, Bogart, Flynn, Cooper. Today we have heroes—Eastwood, Stallone, Schwarzenegger—who snarl, who mouth catch lines to make post-modernists smile. And when that doesn't work, they slaughter anyone in sight. They are kidding, and they know that we know that they are kidding. Heston's mind, by contrast, was clean and clear.

The movies can no longer be regarded as just an art or an entertainment. They are also a way of reducing everything to a species of fake and pretense. The astonishing integrity of Heston's face, his honorable simplicity, have helped make such singular faith harder to sustain. The endless, crushing story-ness of movies and of television have fostered cynicism, so that now "Charlton Heston" is less an impossible role than a camp statue. Whereas the real man is still shy and decent, the helpless witness to change. And he is bewildered, even if he is not the man to explore his own confusion. He doesn't quite see that acting has made being much harder. What makes his book poignant and instructive is the way in which the ghost himself still fancies that he is as solid and true as his face.

DAVID THOMSON is the author of *A Biographical Dictionary of Film* (Knopf).

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The Gospel of Success

By Michael Sean Winters

Saints and Schemers: Opus Dei and Its Paradoxes by Joan Estruch

(Oxford University Press, 302 pp., $30)

A front for Franco. Just like the Masons. Dangerous. Conspiratorial. Fascist. These are a few of the epithets that you hear thrown at Opus Dei, the conservative Catholic organization founded in 1928 by Father José María Escrivá y Albás. And the people offering these compliments are often Catholics.

Opus Dei is an organization of clergy and lay people whose primary charge is the spiritual direction of its members. Full members, called supernumeraries, do not take vows, nor do they leave their professional careers, but in most other respects their lives are organized like the lives of monks and nuns: they live in celibacy, their income and property belong to the community, they owe their obedience to their superiors. Intermediate strata of membership can entail no more than weekly meetings and spiritual direction by one of Opus Dei's priests. Lower levels of membership for married couples and contributors have developed over the years, and even non-Catholics can be "auxiliary" members.

Founded in Spain, Opus Dei has spread around the globe and today boasts over 70,000 members. It is the only personal prelature in the Catholic Church, and so it is largely free from the interference of local ecclesiastical structures: the jurisdiction of Opus Dei extends to persons, not to places. This canonical status was essentially created for Opus Dei, and its members take their unique status within the Catholic Church very seriously. They consider themselves something of a vanguard; and the rigor of their commitment to the Church *is* more pronounced than among many Catholics.

So why all the controversy? Joan Estruch goes a long way toward explaining the notoriety that has plagued Opus Dei since its inception. Unlike previous works about Opus Dei, the confessional hagiographies of its members or the axe-to-grind rantings of its detractors, his methodology and his tone are balanced and evenhanded. The outcome will probably satisfy neither the loyal adherents nor the detractors of Opus Dei. For his sources, Estruch takes the official publications of Opus Dei—there are precious few outside sources for the study of this group—and points out the unexplained contradictions within, suggesting more nuanced interpretations in their place. After listing the saintly attributes catalogued by Escrivá's official biographers, Estruch introduces a note of ambivalent truth, and it nicely captures the near-distance of his tone: "If anything about Escrivá was unalterable, it was his sincerity.... He was sincere in the sense that he was the first to believe whatever he said and whatever he did; he was the first to believe his own propaganda."

The book is divided into two parts, the first an historical and sociological look at Opus Dei, the second an application of Weberian concepts to the relationship between Opus Dei and the spirit (and the reality) of capitalism. Neither discussion is easy to read. The academese is oppressive; it obscures the narrative more than it enhances it. Still, Estruch's book is worth a reasonable amount of readerly perseverance, for the narrative fascinates.

Estruch's portrait of the founder of Opus Dei is textured and largely favorable. He exposes the silliness of the hagiographers who have the good padre, in 1928, romantically receiving a vision of what Opus Dei would look like, and who present the subsequent history of the organization as a mere elaboration of that vision. Estruch argues that Escrivá was a complicated man, whose ambitions changed over time as Opus Dei grew from a small group of clergy trying to influence academic circles in Spain to a Rome-based, predominantly lay, international organization dedicated to the "sanctification of daily work." Estruch compares Escrivá's pronouncements from the 1940s ("the Christians of today are not cut out to be martyrs, but warriors" and "the Christians of this generation are ready to die killing") with Escrivá's mellower later years. In 1959 he told a group of French Opus Dei members that "I want you to be pious, cheerful, optimistic, hardworking, and schemers." Estruch notes that those adjectives, and the final, disturbing noun cast an approximate portrait of the founder himself.

Escrivá was born in Barbastro, Spain, in 1902. His father was a merchant whose lack of success caused the family to move in 1915 to the small city of Logroño, where Escrivá began his seminary studies. Ordained in 1925 at Zaragoza, Escrivá was given a poor assignment in a poor town, but he quickly got himself transferred back to Zaragoza for studies in canon law, and within two years he had transferred to Madrid to complete his legal studies. It was in Madrid that Escrivá had his "vision" of Opus Dei in 1928, and all the official biographies give 1928 as the date of the founding.

Escrivá had many visions, among them visions of grandeur. He petitioned the government to add the noble "de Balaguer" to his family name in place of the more common "y Albás" in 1940. He called his chief assistant, Alvaro del Portillo, "Saxum" or "rock" as Jesus had called Simon "Peter." He wrote a letter to his "children" in Opus Dei in early 1930 (a letter that is made much of by his official biographers, who refer to it by its opening words in Latin, *Singuli dies*, in the manner of papal documents), but there were no members of Opus Dei in early 1930. The good padre became the good monsignor in 1947, and all are agreed that Escrivá showed little enthusiasm for this title: his advocates cite his humility, but his detractors note his disappointment at not being made a bishop. Generally, Escrivá had a knack for being at the right place at the right time.

Estruch returns time and again to *The Way*, Escrivá's main work, a collection of 999 maxims for living the Christian life, analyzing the different editions of the work and their differing emphases as Opus itself changed. This text, treated as deutero-canonical by Opus Dei, was described by the critic José Luis Aranguren as Ignatian asceticism "unbelievably trivialized," and the description is apposite. Some of the maxims are merely banal: "To begin is easy; to persevere is sanctity." Others are alarming: "Caudillos! ... make your will manly so God will make you a caudillo." (The English translation of Escrivá's text puts the word "leader" in place of "caudillo," but the German translation comes closer to the original

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NPG Statement on Population

We Believe that the Optimum Rate of Population Growth is Negative

We believe that the optimum **rate** of population growth for the United States (and for the world) is **negative** until such time as the **scale** of economic activity, and its environmental effects, is reduced to a level that would be sustainable indefinitely.

We are convinced that if present rates of population and economic growth are allowed to continue, the end result, within the lifetimes of many of us, would inevitably be near universal poverty in a hopelessly polluted nation and world.

We agree with Professor Herman Daly who has pointed out that the human economy is a subset of the biosphere, and that **the current scale of economic activity relative to the biosphere is already far too large to be sustainable indefinitely**.

Stabilization Is Not Enough

We believe that calls for merely slowing down rapid population growth, or for stabilizing population at present or even higher levels, **are totally inadequate**.

Such proposals, while presented as a solution, **fail to address the central issue**: how to create a national (and world) economy that will be sustainable indefinitely.

At present or at even higher levels of population, neither the application of science and technology, nor simplifying life-styles, nor any combination of the two, can offer any hope of reducing our impact on the environment to a sustainable level.

We Need a Smaller Population

We recognize that our impact on the environment in terms of pollution and resource depletion is the product of our numbers times our per capita consumption of energy and materials. Thus, there are only three ways by which that impact can be reduced:

- By reducing the size of our population by a negative rate of population growth.
- By reducing over consumption (in the United States and other developed countries) by simplifying life-styles.
- By reducing resource depletion and pollution per unit of consumption through more efficient use of energy and materials.

Population size is by far the most critical of those three variables. **Nevertheless, our present scale of economic activity is so large relative to the biosphere that all three measures are needed in order to reduce it to a sustainable level.**

An Urgent Need

Over 20 years ago, when our U.S. population was far smaller, (about 202 million, rather than our present 264 million), Professor John Holdren correctly saw the urgent need for a negative rate of population growth. At that time he wrote,

"...What is surprising...is that there is not more agreement concerning what the rate of change of population size should be. For given the uncertain, but possibly grave, risks associated with substantially increasing our impact on the environment, and given that population growth aggravates or impedes the solution of a wide variety of other problems...it should be obvious that the optimum **rate** of population growth is zero or negative until such time as the uncertainties have been removed and the problems solved."

A Population Goal for Our Country

We must have, first of all, a nationally determined population goal for our country, accompanied by effective policies to achieve it.

We urge Congress and President Clinton to set, as a top priority national goal, **the achievement of a negative rate of population growth for the United States until such time as the scale of our economic activity is reduced to a sustainable level**.

We also call on our political leaders to urge other nations to pursue a similar goal.

To learn more about NPG's recommendations for programs designed to halt, and eventually to reverse, U.S. and world population growth, write today for our **FREE BROCHURE.** NPG is a national nonprofit membership organization founded in 1972. **We are the only organization that calls for a smaller U.S. and world population, and recommends specific, realistic measures to achieve those goals.**

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meaning of the word, rendering it as *Führer*.)

Pedestrian or frightening, not one of these adages betrays so much as a hint of ambiguity. It was a part of the genius of St. Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus in the sixteenth century, who also taught a muscular, ascetic spirituality, that his writings captured the ambivalence of the spiritual life, the tension between the obviously absconding God and the God who is present to human affairs. The Ignatian texts also honored the complexity of human motivation. *The Way*, by contrast, published the year after the end of the Spanish Civil War, expresses no difficulty and no doubt, no hesitation, no circumspection. While it is safe to assume that Escrivá will not soon displace St. John of the Cross or St. Bernard of Clairvaux among the great spiritual figures of Catholicism, Estruch shows him to be the devoted, hard-working and pious priest that he was. And, unlike Bernard or John, Escrivá stayed in the world, learned its ways and opened a business school in Barcelona.

A business school? It was, in fact, a key element in Opus Dei's strategy of "penetrating" society; and it succeeded with a vengeance. Realizing in the post-World War II years that Spain's economy would need radical modernization, Opus Dei opened the school in 1950. After the shake-up of Franco's government in 1957, Opus Dei members held three cabinet posts, including the Ministry of Commerce and the Treasury. Opus also opened schools at all levels throughout Spain, garnered a monopoly on government-funded research grants and expanded its network of professionals. Although Escrivá's relationship with the Franco regime remains shrouded (Estruch says little about it), and the Falange certainly had no use for Opus Dei, seeing it as a rival suitor for Franco's heart, in 1944 Escrivá directed Franco's personal spiritual exercises at the caudillo's family retreat.

Opus Dei's desire to influence the influential is one of the primary sources of its controversial status, and with good reason. First, as Estruch points out, this put Opus Dei on a collision course with the Jesuits, whose basic objective and means were the same. (The Jesuits also opened a business school in Barcelona in 1950.) The Spanish Jesuits at that time also preached a rigid Catholic integralism—to be a good Spaniard was to be a good Catholic—and for both groups education was the field of battle against the secularizing forces of the day. Second, as a private organization devoted primarily to spiritual direction, there has long been a charge of secretiveness against Opus Dei. (This is a little unfair. If you go to the Franciscan monastery in Washington, D.C., for example, and ask if they give spiritual direction, they will say that they do. If you ask who they give such direction to, they will tell you that it is none of your business. And they are right.) The most damning charge against Opus Dei, however, is the one that Estruch ignores. Influencing the influential may be a sound political objective, but it is not what Jesus of Nazareth did. He, remember, identified himself with the poor, the outcasts, the disenfranchised. Opus Dei's interest in power may make worldly sense, and it has certainly made them a lot of money, but it is not an interest that is found in the Gospels.

Opus Dei's money is another sensitive matter. The magnitude of its fortune is not known, but when the Vatican needed some $300 million or so to get out of the Banco Ambrosiano scandal in the 1980s, it was Opus that coughed up the funds. (And Monsignor Escrivá was beatified *subito*!) The houses of study and residences maintained by Opus in the United States are well-located and well-funded, which arouses at least the envy of the average priest who cannot get the Catholics of his parish to pay for a new roof. Opus Dei is undoubtedly a little too aggressive in its ambition to render unto Caesar. The Gospels, remember again, are clear about the dangers that wealth poses to the spirit; and there is no reason to believe that it is any easier today for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it was 2,000 years ago. Though Opus Dei might wish to forget it, and the Christian right in this country certainly has forgotten it, Jesus threw money changers out of the temple, not homosexuals or liberals.

When Escrivá went to Rome in 1946 to gain canonical recognition for his organization, he did not meet with much success in that labyrinth known as the Vatican curia. It took a year for Opus Dei to clarify its juridical status and another four years before its constitutions received final approval. This taught the organization a lesson about the importance of playing the curia, and within a short time Opus Dei had priests placed throughout the organizational apparatus of the Vatican. Often they took jobs no one else wanted, and always they performed them with the professional zeal that characterizes the organization. As Pope John Paul II has required a more efficient and far-reaching bureaucracy to put his stamp on the universal Church, Opus Dei's reputation for professional, and theological, reliability has greatly increased their stature in his eyes. They were unable to prevent one of their loudest and most perduring critics, Hans Urs von Balthasar, from receiving a red hat in 1987, but still they cast a giant shadow. In the complex organization of the Vatican, you scorn Opus Dei at your peril.

Estruch charts the history of Opus Dei in extraordinary detail and with great sympathy. It should surprise nobody that Opus Dei changed over the years; and Estruch wonders why the official Opus Dei authors are at such great pains to deny it. Of course, it is an important part of identity, in any individual or group or nation, to get its own history wrong. In the case of Opus Dei, they get their history *very* wrong. *The Way* has little to say about the "sanctification of work," and there was no such heading in the index of the first edition. Despite contemporary claims on Escrivá's behalf, to the effect that

An Old Palindrome

Just before his wretched brother Cain
slew him, he saw a frail
Shadow in the water, feminine,
but his—like some sister
He would not live to have; it flickered
in among the shadows
Of darker leaves that framed it in—on,
but in—the surface of
The pool. "Who art thou?" "*I am Leba*"
answered a voice almost
His own. Then shadow and voice vanished
together. He was left
Bereft of some of self and, even
as his brother's blow fell
So dead upon him, cried "*Abel was*
I ere I saw Leba."
"Leba"? Daughter-son of Lilith? Son-
daughter of his own heart?
Something far worse than we later read
that his mother had seen.
—Something that in any case was far
more terrifying than
What it was later written that Eve
had seen in her own pool.

JOHN HOLLANDER

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his teachings were a precursor of the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on the laity, his early writings demonstrate no such emphasis. A similar re-writing of its history accompanies the official writers' discussions of the juridical status of Opus Dei. But here Estruch goes too far. In his discussion of the relations between Opus Dei and Pope Paul VI, he emphasizes only the strains and difficulties in the relationship; but whatever Paul thought of Opus Dei, they still think well of him. Several years ago, the conservative moral theologian Germain Grisez was to give a lecture at Opus Dei's Roman College in which he was mildly critical of Paul's handling of *Humanae Vitae*, the papal encyclical of 1968 that proscribed birth control. When Opus Dei learned of this criticism, they canceled the lecture.

And yet none of this suffices to account for the extraordinary amount of suspicion aroused by Opus Dei. After all, there are other organizations within the Church that have gobs of money, but nobody sounds the alarm about the Knights of Columbus. An answer may undoubtedly be found in the Spanishness of Opus Dei, and Estruch is especially good in considering this aspect of its history. The Francoist roots of Opus Dei are only a part of the story. The larger fact is that the spirituality of the organization is classically Spanish: muscular, highly structured, misogynistic, corporeal. This rankles, in the last decade of the twentieth century, and in the West, where the mortification of the flesh is rather lacking in prestige. In truth, of course, talk about "becoming a caudillo" should frighten everyone, not just Estruch. And the highly structured character of Spanish spirituality, its ideal of vowed obedience and lifelong renunciation, isn't for everybody. (Opus Dei is the first to admit this.)

Another answer lies in Opus Dei's method of operation. They are more than a little reticent about some of their activities; indeed, they seem to have a kind of institutional horror of the light. You will look in vain for their name on different projects that they sponsor. Spiritual direction must, for obvious reasons, be a private affair; but it is one thing to give spiritual direction, it is another to recruit influential people for spiritual direction. And assigning chaplains at universities and sponsoring symposia are not private affairs. In 1981, Basil Cardinal Hume, the Archbishop of Westminster, found it necessary to issue regulations requiring Opus Dei to clearly state its sponsorship for all of its activities within his bishopric. But the thrill of secretiveness aside, who really needs it? There is nothing particularly unseemly, after all, about conducting conferences on family life or running a school. Until Opus changes its secretive ways, there will always be those who see it as a cabal.

Its recruitment activities and its insistence that members use only Opus Dei priests for confession were recently the subject of a hard-hitting cover story in the Jesuit weekly, *America*. That article, by James Martin S.J., also raised concerns about their confessional practices, specifically a certain coerciveness with regards to sharing with the group what one chooses to share in the private forum of the confessional. Not since the days of *autos-da-fé* has the Church sanctioned coercion in the administration of sacraments.

But the organization's main offense to the modern mind, I think, is its reputation for zealousness. A culture bred on irony does not sit well with zeal. And most modern believers have directed their religion into a corner of their lives and prefer not to think about the radicalism of a faith's claims upon the entirety of a life. Real theological seriousness is just too discomfiting, philosophically and practically. The Opus Dei ideal seems just too much to ask.

But here is the joke. The organization is not as frightening as it seems to be because it is not as profound as it seems to be. Estruch does not really consider this aspect of Opus Dei until the final chapter of his book, and then only to contrast the modernism of Opus Dei's methods with the traditionalism of its beliefs; but I would like to debunk Opus Dei's reputation for zealotry here and now. Yes, some of its members are celibate, and yes, celibacy is different. Yes, some of their practices are medieval. Yes, the members are enormously dedicated. But the dominant impression one gets from reading Escrivá's *The Way*, or his other writings on spiritual guidance, is not an impression of radicalism. Quite the contrary. This is checklist spirituality: do these seven things every day for the rest of your life and you will be a saint.

There is something a little American about checklist spirituality. But the problem with checklist spirituality is not that it is American. The problem is that it is Pelagian. Pelagianism, as a historian once nicely described it, "consisted in assigning an undue importance to free will, and cast a consequential slur upon the doctrine of original sin. It thus threatened to deprive mankind, from its very birth, of an essential part of our inheritance." The making of saints becomes man's work as opposed to God's work. Holiness is something to be achieved, not something to be given. And for this reason Pelagianism is a heresy.

In the fifth century, when Pelagius, who lived in Britain, formulated his theories, he had the bad luck to run up against Augustine of Hippo, whose opposing soteriological teachings were received as orthodox. Augustine taught that no amount of effort on our part can produce an iota of God's grace unless He freely chooses to bestow it. The soul must cooperate in God's grace, must say yes to the invitation of faith, but the soul cannot generate it. Pelagianism may fit the "can do" spirit of our day, and it may correspond better to the professional work ethic of Opus Dei, but it is, from the standpoint of the Church, untrue. And its untruth obscures the radicalism of the Christian belief that what Christians need for their salvation has already been accomplished on a hillside in Jerusalem.

So Opus Dei isn't radical at all. It desires to penetrate the world, when it should be more concerned with penetrating the Gospel. It wants to succeed in the world as a way to get to heaven, forgetting that God promised to make both of them new. Opus Dei's spirituality has been gutted of the unbelievability of the Gospel, turned into spiritual growth tips and a set of penitential wagers, robbed of its power to shock and to scandalize and, consequently, to save. "Truly with you," as Isaiah has it, "God is hidden." Its busy and successful people carry on its business; but it is just their business, not God's work. There isn't much reason to wrestle with a spirituality and an organization that wrestles not at all.

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BALTIMORE DIARIST

Indulgences

TWO AND A HALF HOURS BEFORE the pope arrived at Camden Yards on October 8, I stood in a long line debating untheologically whether to return from the experience with a papal keychain, a papal water bottle or just a plain old papal lapel pin. A woman behind me remarked that there were no religious artifacts for sale, which was surprising, since Catholics have perfected mass-market iconography. No glow-in-the-dark rosaries, no sticky-bottomed statues of Mary, no garish holy candles with saints beckoning in technicolor ecstasy. I was disappointed: religious kitsch is kitsch, but often it's evidence of life, of believing energy. Here, the souvenir stand was an agnostic plastic wasteland. Tinker with the logos a little, and this could have been a Michael Bolton concert.

I MADE MY WAY UP TO MY SEAT high above first base, my water bottle in hand, and waited. The pope hadn't even left Newark, but the stadium was almost full. I felt sorry for anyone wanting to use the hours before Mass to read (I had a handy pocket copy of *Lives of the Saints*), to pray or to catch up on some sleep. The pre-game show made rest or tranquillity impossible. It was the sort of spectacle that I had previously associated only with big-time college football. Circles of dancers in different national costumes waved and undulated on the field. The jumbo-tron monitor on the scoreboard flashed the nonsensical words of a soft-pop religious song: "Shine oh people, Shine our God together." (Give me Michael Bolton. Almost.) And the inanity of the lyrics wasn't nearly as bad as the inanity of the chipper chatter by the on-the-field narrators. One of them asked for a "papal wave," and the spirit instantly and serially moved the arms of this American congregation. A pert usher climbed vigorously up the stadium steps asking if everyone had a pennant to wave. (At what? The Host?) As an army of priests and bishops entered the field, children swayed in time to a synthesizer medley that began with "Amazing Grace," and a second broadcaster noted that "200 of *your* bishops and 300 of *your* priests are here today." It was probably a good idea to emphasize the pronoun; I, at least, wished I didn't have to claim this circus as my own. And the TV-style tension started building. "In just moments, our pilgrim of peace will be here ... in Camden Yards," declared one of the ready-for-ESPN baritones. This was the cue for the finale. The dancers retook the field, accompanied by a flip-card brigade and a parade of men and women carrying different national flags. A gospel choir sang, "I want to be ready when Jesus comes." OK, but who could find Him in this pandemonium?

IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT THIS overdone spectacle was perhaps a mischievous plan of the Vatican's, a clever theatrical sermon against American materialism and in favor of Roman sternness. Maybe this was the Holy Father's way of saying he's all that stands between us and Disney: here is what happens when religiosity comes unmoored from a slightly morbid tendency to self-denial; here is what you get, what you deserve, when entertainment usurps godliness. The nadir came when Boyz II Men took the stage and started rapping as the Popemobile entered the stadium. The pope looked a little confused. Who wasn't? Then he emerged from his funny plastic car and walked slowly up to the raised altar in center field, and the unholy carnival evaporated completely. "Peace be with you," he said, and peace there was.

I AM A CATHOLIC AMERICAN WHO is more American than Catholic, and my views on certain questions have left me unexcited about the pope and the papacy. From my position, popes seem irrelevant or oppressive, or, if they are interesting, wicked and long dead. It would be an exaggeration to say that I was converted at Camden Yards. But I was moved in a way I never expected. I'm not sure how to explain this without lapsing into the schlocky sentimentality that horrified me in the hours before the pope appeared. But John Paul II complicated me. I was present at a real Mass at the baseball stadium. This remote authoritarian figure, who lives in a milieu that I cannot possibly imagine, said a Mass for people like me—no, for me; that's a serious and substantial thing. It was like every Mass I have ever attended—the same cadences, intonations, pauses, prayers—and it was like none. Shivering in Camden Yards' chilly wind, I was caught between the quotidian and the sublime. Now my skepticism will have to share space with awe and, oddly, gratitude.

THE MOST POLITICALLY TROUBLESOME thing about the pope's homily in Baltimore was not his obvious reference to abortion (" ... witnessing to Christ means challenging [the] culture, especially when the truth about the human person is under assault"), but his declaration that "democracy cannot be sustained without a shared commitment to certain moral truths about the human person and human community." American democracy does rest on moral truths, a whole passel of them, but these truths are rarely legislated. You agree that I can treat your absolutes as your opinions, and I agree that you can treat my absolutes as my opinions; and the free pursuit of opinions is more conducive to social peace than the imposition of absolutes. A very catholic country can never be a very Catholic country. And yet Baltimore, where the colonial Catholics who had made religious tolerance the rule were fiercely persecuted when the rules changed, is a fine place to remember that being a Catholic among the catholic is a pretty good fate.

"FAITH LEADS US BEYOND OURselves," John Paul II said. This is, of course, the antithesis of some varieties of multiculturalism, which suffocate us within our (small) selves. During the Mass I thought about multiculturalism because I couldn't not think about it. In front of me sat a row of girls in unfamiliar uniforms, who identified themselves as Polish Girl Scouts. Not Girl Scouts from Poland—they had mid-Atlantic accents and boxes of Triscuits—but ethnically Polish American girls (and a couple of boys) wearing Polish-language patches and looking wide-eyed when the pope rattled off a proverb in his native tongue. Next to me was an African American woman; on my other side was an Indian family of four who slipped in and out of English. I joined in offering a prayer for "the holy Church of God throughout the world." Then I watched silently and read the jumbo-tron translations of prayers in French, Swahili, German, Gaelic, Italian, Polish (the girls nodded), Spanish, Tagalog, Korean and Vietnamese. The Catholic Church, divided as it may be, is not a hotbed of ethnic strife. This, I thought, is what American multiculturalism doesn't get. Diversity, when rightly construed, is another name for universality. *E Pluribus Unum*: those may be the only Latin words many American Catholics understand, but if they really understand them, they understand a lot.

JENNIFER BRADLEY

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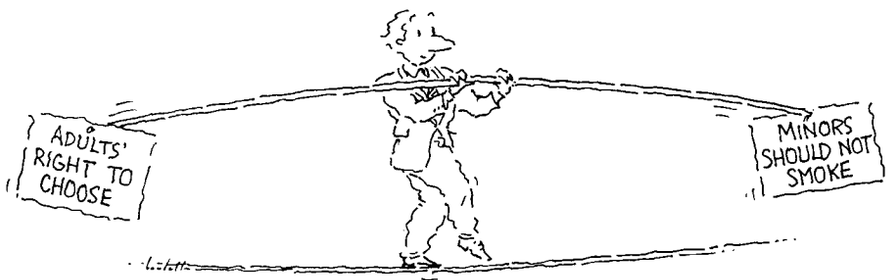
Our position, word by word.

Balance



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